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NOTE

I ask [of whoever finds] this [manuscript] to forward it to Henia Edelsztein, or Meir Sztromer, or Maks Sztromer from America. His address [is] 1035 Washington Ave, Brooklyn, America. My sister Henia Edelsztein [lives] also in Brooklyn. I don't remember her address. Or [you] can inform the Kominker Society in Brooklyn. My cousin, Neshi Groskof, in London, 40 Glauchester Ave, can also be informed about this. I am not sure whether the addresses are correct.

I am writing these words a few nights before I am supposed leave the place, the attic, where I have been hiding out for over or exactly 300 days. The days in the place were not any brighter than the nights. However, what I would like to do is to continue to stay in this place, or find a similar one. God, please, help me to forward this [manuscript] to my brother Meir Sztromer or my sister in America, personally, Henia Edelsztein,

their brother Mordche Sztromer.

***

I would like to list here my friends with whom I was together in a camp; not all of them, only the ones who were with me in the

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barracks, in the can factory. I will list the names, and if God will let me, I will write down their experiences.

1. Stanislaw Goldsztein, our supervisor and his sons; 2. Lolek Goldsztein. 3. Biliewitch the supervisor's assistant; 4. Szmil Gelber, a butcher from Lemberg [Lvov]; 5. Dr. Szwarts and his relative, also 6. Dr. Szwarts - both from Lemberg and known to 7. Merindilein Altkoren, 8. Milek Altkoren - both from near Szranken, the Altkoren are from Dikiszner. 9. Izie Lislifer from Roker, lived always in the factory. 10. Hamaides, a young man, a butcher from near Szranken; 11. Berger or Szapranski, he came from Kristinopol. He married in Lemberg, and had a leather store; 12. Feifer Lislifer's brother-in-law; 13. Eli Kleinszfirs, a butcher, at one time he was also a coachman. In the butcher circles he was called Eli the doctor whose wife was shot in the place; 14. Lifiec a merchant of derma. He was ashamed that he was selling derma in a dairy store; 15. Mondik Sztadler, a butcher; 16. Botskinder a son of a shoe merchant from Lemberg; 17. Yosel Hoinich. Had a sister in America; 18. Szamten Noshen a merchant of roofs. 19. Szmeril Kogel, a butcher. He passed away in the barracks, and we buried him in the garden; 20. Szmuel Laupt or Gelber was an art merchant. He was detail oriented. He also passed away; 21. Also a well known Dr. Laupt with his 22. brother-in-law, also a Dr. - both passed away in Zborek. However, they were still buried in the Holy Place [cemetery] where the Ghetto was located. They were murdered in a factory across from a slaughterhouse, I don't remember the name of the street; 23. Margolis also a butcher; 24. Dr. Teichman. I believe he was from Hoderow or Borislaw or from another town. A friend, a lawyer,

brought him, his wife and a one year son to Lemberg, during an action. When they were getting off the bus, an SS man hit the child over the head with a weapon, and killed him, as the parents were watching. Later on, he ran away from our barrack. Later on, he ran away from our cashiers. Then he was seen as they led him to the sand. He had a sulfur factory. 25. Berensztein and Lemberger, leather merchants; a son-in-law; 26. Szeinbach, a young Hasidic man from Przemyszl or Jaroslaw. His parents were cloth merchants. The man had a say with the German director of the jacket making section; 27/28. two brothers, Izie and Miszke Ekerling or Frank. They, together with their father and mother sat with me under Jewish arrest. The father was sent to Graiding, where he was shot in the camp. The mother from Wiecbickie was led directly to the sand [probably an expression for execution in the sand]. And the two boys lived with me together in the barracks. The older boy was a veterinary student, and the younger one a High School [gymnasia] student. Their grandfather was well known typesetter in Jaroslaw. They have an uncle in Palestine; 29. Kotlarski, the younger one, a student. His father had a hardware store near Szranke; 30. A young friend [named] Proster from near Szrank. Their home was located after the gas refinery; 31. Krenitel a former paid-waiter worked for Zeingahten in Lemberg; 32. Izie Kozel born in Hungary. A brother-in-law from the Gelber brothers. A butcher; 33. Dr. of medicine Tabatchnik, a younger Dr. studies in Italy or a son from Volin; 34/35. Kanigel, a father with a 13 year old boy. I don't have any other information about the two; 36. David Foks, a youth of 14 or 15 years. Szapranski was his uncle. His grandfather, I think, had

see p 78 Kahane

Next to Belzec the sands served as the largest mass graves of the Jews of Lvov.

a store in Lemberg; 37. Moris or Sternik, a young student, the son of a former factory manager of the Kazimierowicz factory - producing salami, later, under the Russian rule, a shop steward in the Roker can factory; 38. Wander, owner of Koti. Brought an action from Koti to Lemberg in the camp. Wife and children taken to Belzec [concentration camp]; 39. A young, well known man [named] Goldfinger from Krakow. I notice that I am not sure if all names are correct because in camp people not always used their real names. I also used the name of Taksel. However, all the made up names can be mentioned. I don't have the head for it.

INTRODUCTION

Today is the 6th of April, 1944, Thursday.

I had a hard time to decide whether to write or not [this], because I have always hoped that I will live through the greatest disaster which goes under the name of Hitlerism. I would like personally and openly to tell my dear sister, and maybe my very dear brother, how many days I struggled with the thought yes to write, or not to write. And now that I am writing, I don't know if I'll be able to complete it. In any event, I'll try to write down a part of my experiences, even though it's impossible to tell it all on paper now that the situation is getting worse from day to day, and the chances for survival are getting smaller from hour to hour, because the Ukrainian National bandits murder and burn Polish villages and

Poles (Jews are not there anymore). It so happens that at the moment I am in a place which can also fall victim to the above mentioned society. And once everything is on paper, is there a right person who will hide the [manuscript]. God helped me, as I am writing these words, I hear the exploding artillery shells. Is there a possibility that my memoirs will burn in a fire? I am writing with mistakes, and my Yiddish is very weak, but can I write in another language so no Jew can read about the greatest upheaval and suffering. The fact is that my personal tragedy is the tragedy of hundreds and thousands of Jews. It does not make any difference how the story is told. I am sure there are worse and even more terrible stories than mine. Yet, I will write with mistakes, and no one can interfere in my disaster, or that of the Jewish people, if the paper will remain, and will reach the right hands, let it be in the hands of my only sister Henia Edelsztein from America as a memento from me. I would like her to know how happy I would be to know that she'll read my story. However, let it be what it may, and I want to hope that I will survive long enough to see my remaining family, and then I will laugh at life because on more than one occasion I looked death into the eye.

Mordche.

[2]

<u>A short overview of our life during the period of Russian occupation.</u>

After the fall of the Polish government, the [Soviet Union,] people's deputy for foreign affairs, Mr. Molotov, in a speech in Moscow, on the 7th of September, 1939, declared that the Russian army will cross the former borders of Poland, and occupy the nations of West Ukraine and West White Russia. We were very happy with the order because if the German armies would enter our area, we would be victims of the German government. After the Red Army entered, many people were afraid of communism, especially the wealthy people, such as proprietors of mills and saw-mills, and other factory and large store owners. I was not afraid [of the Russians], just the opposite, I was ecstatic about their coming because during the last period of the Polish rule the standard of living of the Polish Jews became bitter. The Polish government was anti-semitic. I remember exactly the opinion of the former Polish Prime minister Skladkowski, and the known incidents and murders of Jewish students at the Polish universities. I think that my dear sister and brother-in-law were still living here when the incidents occurred. Today, all this looks like cat play - does it matter whether you shoot one person or five hundred people during a span of ten minutes. It's like a spit in griven [broiled chicken skin]. In general, we, the former Polish small businessmen, complained and were suffocating from the Polish tax system. I don't want to go into matters of the past. However, I want to say one thing - the Russian government made mentchn [good human beings] from many Jews. Personally, I worked all my life. As they say, I did not have a Shabbat or a holiday. It was always business, and again business. When the Russian first came they did not tell anyone anything. Gradually, they began to organize

cooperatives. We joined immediately, and met in the old location - the beer saloon. We were all working, I with my brother, and my father. Suddenly, I noticed that I don't have to stay in the store a whole day and half the night as before. I became an employee in the same old store. [3] Everyday, I was given merchandise which I sold in a few hours, and then I was a free man. I could wash up, dress up, and go for a walk in the street, read a newspaper, or listen to the radio. I was not interested in taxes or patents. I was a free bird. After the few hours of work, I had all the time in the world. As for my dearest parents, I can't imagine that everything was already in the past, and the happiest time of my life will not return, even if I will live to see the Bolsheviks, because the loveliest is the most beautiful. My life was ripped out of me in a manner which can't be even compared to the way the loathsome wild people destroy their enemies. I seem to be drifting away from the main theme. Believe me that all these events force themselves into my mind. I have a hard time gathering my thoughts. After some time, we, meaning I and my brother, went to a military restaurant and found work for the two of us. There was one thing we had to worry about on the job, we had to make sure that the commanders should have breakfast, dinner, and evening meal on time, the food should be excellent, and the service should be competent. I used to walk or travel to work every day, at daybreak, so I could be there when breakfast was served. I was responsible for collecting money for sold food and drinks. I was also responsible for the money [finances]. I had to my disposition horses and a wagon, a truck, and people. I used to go with the wagon to buy a variety of items for

the buffet: apples, pears, chocolate, a variety of baked goods, eggs, butter, chicken, geese, and ducks which were slaughtered. In one word, one could get everything he wanted. The meals were very cheap. Breakfast was two rubles, and dinner was three rubles. For breakfast one could get tea or milk, for dinner meat. Considering that an officer received a monthly paycheck of five hundred to a thousand rubles, he could live very well. I used to get five hundred rubles a month. [4] I could eat and drink whatever I desired. If I wanted to, I could even live there [in the restaurant]. I washed my clothe in the military laundry. We had also a bathroom to our disposal. My brother received 250 rubles a month, plus food and drink. We made a good living. I did not let my mother do anything, not even to put a hand in cold water [a local expression for doing absolutely nothing]. She looked like a pretty rose. We rented a store, and opened a general store. All wives from the military personnel used to purchase in our store all kind of foodstuff and home items. Father was a guard in our store during the night. According to the Russian constitution, a person who does not work does not eat. In our home we had everything the best. The soldier who was selling in the store, used to inform me, on a regular basis, about the better items he received for sale. So I had in the buffet the best and most beautiful items. I should note that all this was going on under the government of the workers and the peasants. A Russian general was not ashamed to do anything anyone else was doing. They ate with others, shook hands with others, and bargained like the lowest element. At the beginning, I thought it was impossible, because it was not done that way when I served in the

(9)

Polish army. The lower officers, a bit lower in rank than the commander, addressed the workers as equal. One worked at a job, and the other worked at a military job. Whenever my mother wanted to visit my sister in Lemberg, I used to get a light truck which took her there. In an hour, my mother saw her daughter. In most cases, the wife of the colonel, my boss, or her sister used to go along with my mother. It so happened that the two women were Jewish, while one of the husband's was a Russian. The sister was a Jewish girl. They knew how to write Yiddish. They loved to visit my sister on Friday, eat fish and Chalah, and then return home. My mother used to remain for Shabbat. then on Sunday or Monday, I used to go with my truck to take her back. On the second day of Passover, my brother was inducted into the army. He was sent to Bessarabia on a military job. When the war broke out between Russia and Germany, he was in Bessarabia. From there the people from the village of Odes were taken to Russia. This was the last information we received from him. [5] We received information about my brother from one named Kruk from Zabadzie. He was with my brother in Bessarabia during the entire period, and later he returned to Kaminke.

April 1941

Sunday, when the war broke out, my mother was visiting Zlata [my sister] in Lemberg. They were discussing a wedding date with Pepe, and Pepe was supposed to come back with mother, and stay with us for the summer. Unfortunately, at this time, the horror broke out.

Sunday, the 22nd of June, 1941, the horror broke out, and the part, the life from my warmest and most beloved part, was destroyed for me and for hundreds and thousands of Jewish families in the most barbaric way.

From the 22nd to the 29th of June, I continued to work at my job though the entire army was at Most Rawa and Zolkwia. Some of us remained and continued to slaughter cattle and pigs, and send it to those who were at the front. I was asked to join the Russians and follow them to the interior of the Soviet Union. However, the first Sunday, I did not have the heart to leave my dearest and beloved ones. Had we thought at the time that such a terrible event will take place, we would have ran like small children into the Russian territory. The second Sunday, it was already too late. My mother was pushing me: "Go. Run away. We will stay here." However, there was no army left. Everybody was running to Bisk, and from there to Zloczew, Tarnopol, and eventually to Russia. I was asking known to me officers to take me to friends of the cashiers where I worked, but they were not to be found, and strangers did not want to take with them too many persons. Secondly, they were not thinking about others. Their main concern was to save themselves. Everything was moving with the speed of lightening. I went home and laid down on a bench. My head was burning. The moment my father entered the home and announced that the Germans are marching in, and passed the public school, I walked out the house and went behind the beloved home of Moshe Mordche Polak, to the home of my uncle Hirsz. Until this very day, I have not seen the town.

[6]

REMENOW

As I mentioned earlier, two hours after the German marched into [our town], I left my home and went to the home of my uncle Hirsh.

His home was closed. They were all hiding out in the basement of Itzhak Szteper because his home was made out of bricks. They were afraid to stay in their wooden homes. They believed that their and other such homes will fall apart from falling bombs. I went into the basement, and called them out, to tell them the good news - the Germans are here. In the home of my uncle Hirsz lived his daughter Ruchale with her husband and three children, and Chadzia, the wife of the deceased Chaim Itzik, with 3 children. I remained with my uncle Sunday night, Monday a whole day, and Tuesday a whole day and night. All the alleys were full of soldiers. Already on Monday, my uncle was caught [by the Germans] as he went to get some water from the well. A German was holding him by the beard and beating him, while another [German] was taking a picture. ✓

Monday morning, even Chadzia was saying that we will get along better with the Germans than the Soviets because the latter are a cultured people. She was upset at the Russians because they took away her property, and ordered her to leave Lemberg [under the Russian law, any rich person had to leave a large city and live in a village]. She received from the Russian government the well known passport 11. The passport with paragraph 11 was given to persons who were known as being very rich. After the beating of my uncle, it's possible she changed her mind about the Germans. I did not asked her about it. However, I am sure that later on she changed her mind. [in response to what occurred], my blood was boiling but what could I do about it. I was like a lion in a cage.* Tuesday evening one could already find murdered Jews.* A passing by Jewish doctor was killed near the courthouse. And near the home of uncle Hirsz, the Germans

caught the son of Yankil Aksen, and killed him on the spot. [the following people] were also murdered: Mosze Kats, Itsele Berzaner the grandson of the small Chaimke. I can go on listing dozens of person who were killed but this is not part of the issue at hand. I am only mentioning two small children. Tuesday evening my mother came to me and said: "Dear child, you must flee from here because I am afraid of [what] tomorrow [may bring]."

[7] The same day, I talked it over with Gever. We decided to walk to Lemberg the next day - Wednesday, at dawn. Next day, Wednesday, at dawn, my mother came again and said: "Go already because Gever left already." Hurriedly, I dressed, said goodbye, and went through Saboszanka, a suburb of Lemberg. In Szaboszanka I met Gever. He was escorted by his girl. He was carrying a milk container to make believe that he was going to buy milk. I caught up with him, and we walked on together to Remenow. No one bothered us as we walked. On the way, a few shepherds asked us for a few cigarettes. We gave it to them. By seven o'clock in the morning, we were in Remenow.

July 2, 1941

At the entrance to the village, on the left side of the road, at the foot of a mountain, stood a Jewish home. Outside the home, stood a Jewish woman, crying hysterically. She told us that their shepherd took her husband out to work early in the morning, and after four hours they have yet to return home. Many Jews were already murdered in the village. Her girl was yesterday, Tuesday, in Lemberg. She [reported] that Jewish blood was flowing in the streets of Lemberg. The entire heart was bathing in Jewish blood, and the Jewish homes were looted. This was the first account of waht was happening in Lemberg, the town where the two of us were seeking refuge. As we

were about to leave the Jewish woman, we comforted her by telling her that her husband will definitely return home very soon. We said goodbye and were on our way. However, we did not get too far. As we reach the top of the hill, a healthy Ukrainian Christian approached Gever and demanded to see from him and me identification papers. Then he pushed us into a building which was located on the right side of the road leading from Kaminke to Lemberg, located right next to the Remenow saloon. Once inside, we showed our passports which we held in our hands. The man took them and put them on the table. Soon afterwards, two other bandits came in. [8] They searched us, and took away everything we had on our bodies. I had a good few hundreds [of currency], a bottle of liquor, 2 pair of socks, and handkerchiefs. Gever had money and a wonderful watch. All the [confiscated] items were deposited on the table. In the meantime, other Ukrainians came into the room, and started to beat us. The beating went on for hours. It was merciless. There was no place on my body which was not brown and blue [= to English expression: black and blue] or bleeding. We could not scream or moan anymore. All my hair from the front of my head was ripped out. Blood was oozing from my head, nose, mouth and ears. Had the same men beaten me for all that time, they would not have the strength in their hands and legs to go on for such a long time. Unfortunately for us, all the time new comrades were coming in adding new strength. The beating went on nonstop. I had eleven knife wounds. Similarly, Gever was knifed repeatedly in various parts of his body. Lying on the floor, I saw Gever. He did not resemble a human being anymore. The same was true for me. They undressed us, let us naked on the floor, and took away

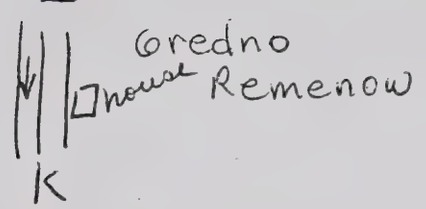
all our clothes. They were screaming and accusing us of killing enough of their brothers, stating that now we are running to help our brothers in Lemberg. Furthermore, they accused us of being Communists-Bolsheviks. They [told us that] in the present situation, Stalin should help us. They were beating us with sticks, knives, rifle butts, and revolver handles. In beating us, one of them even used the sharp edge of a hand shovel. Gever fainted a few times. At one point I stopped screaming, but I did not faint, a fact which made my tormentors very angry. So, they found a new method of hurting me. One of them used a metal canister to bring 2-3 loads of gravel, the kind that is generated when cobble stones, used for road construction, is chiseled. They spread the gravel on the floor and made me kneel on it. My knees were bleeding profusely. At the same time, a few bandits stood and jumped on my legs. [From pain], I saw everything black, but still I did not faint. [9] Then they stretched me on my back, while one of them was jumping on my chest cavity. The pain I experienced was horrendous. I can't perceive how I lived through this ordeal. Gever was spared the beating because he fainted, and was lying on the floor unconscious. For the next few days, I had small pebbles embedded in my back, and wounds throughout my body which burned like sharp edges of iron. When I turned completely black like coal, the door opened, and in came an Ukrainian from Kaminke, the well known Balahorek, with his son, a student, who most probably was coming from Lemberg. In a very weak voice, I addressed Balahorek, and asked him to order my execution, and halt my torturing. He did not recognize me. He could not recognize me. It was impossible because I looked more like a wild

creature than a human being. He smiled. He is Kodkodinski's son-in-law. You should know, throughout the entire period, they were discussing whether to kill us on the spot or take us into the field and do it there. They had weapons which remained from the period of the Russian rule [occupation]. After my whole body was one large wound, they all left the room. Soon afterwards, one of them brought in a Jewish boy. Ten minutes later, they brought in two more persons. I recognized them. It was Beila Reher, Szija's Reher's daughter with her husband. Her husband served with me in the Polish army. He was originally from Sokal. He had a brother-in-law who lived in Kaminke. He was known as the fat one, a kettle-maker. The two [who were brought into the room] met in a cooperative during the period of Russian rule, and also married there. They did not recognize me, and obviously, did not recognize Gever who at the time was unconscious. They did not beat them. They only took away their money, watches, and all the foodstuff they carried on them. The men left the room, except for the one who originally brought me and Gever into the room. He was the bad murderer. [10] He was the one who ripped out all the hair from my head. When all the men left, and the man continued to hit me in the head with the butt of the rifle, I addressed him in a very weak voice, and asked him to stop beating me. I told him to take some money from the table, and I will say that I had less money to begin with. In response [to my request], he hit me over my already hurting head, and opened yet another wound. A moment later, the group [of bandits] returned. They told us to get up from the floor. At the time, we were all kneeling on the floor facing the wall. The two newcomers were dressed, I was naked, while

Gever wore only a pair of long pants. I could not stand up, so they ordered the youth, the stranger and Baile's husband to hold me up. Baile said a prayer for Gever. As you can imagine, I could barely stand on my feet. One of the men held a piece of paper, and read: as a result of the discussion they had, we were all sentenced to death by shooting. The sentence was to be carried out immediately, in the field. One of them brought in a pair of old Austrian pants and a jacket. A few men took Gever under the arms, and dressed him up quickly in similar old clothes. I could not move my hands or legs. Yet, somehow, I managed to get into the old clothes with the help of my two friends. As I was doing this, I saw the afterlife [other world]. My entire body was full of embedded gravels. When I managed to put on the pants, one of them, while abusing me verbally, grabbed me from behind by the little hair which remained, because most of the hair on my head was already torn out, and the head was badly banged up, and, jokingly, ordered me to wash off the blood from my forehead before I am killed. [11] I had a good feeling in my heart that this was not going to be my end. Gever told me that he will not live through this day. All the men left the room except for the one with a gun in his hand. He took the szmates [old clothes] and covered my and Gever's head. He ordered all of us to kneel on the floor and kiss the Ukrainian earth which till this day carried and fed us. All four men were standing in the four corners of the room, facing the wall, while Beile was lying on the floor, in the middle of the room, face down. The room was full of our blood, as well as of a young Christian whom they shot before we arrived. He was a young Komsomol [communist youth organization] and a committed

Soviet. He was from the village, so I was told by a woman, whose daughter, very early in the morning, had to go at 7 o'clock in the morning to wash the floor. As we stood in the room facing the wall, the bandit took some money from the table. He hurriedly put the money into his pocket. He did not want the others to find out about it. The finished the liquor some time earlier. The time was 2 o'clock. After some time, the group once again came into the room. There is a possibility that in another room there were more Jews because we heard screaming. We were in the left side of the building, in a small room. The room on the right side of the house was larger. One of the group, presumably the representative, ordered one of the man to load his gun with 5 bullets, and ordered Gever to put on his jacket. He then asked him if he wanted to go to Lemberg or Kaminke. Gever said that he wants to go to Kaminke. The man said that he will escort him to Lemberg, and ordered the man with the loaded gun to take him. Gever was given another pair of shoes, because his shoes were taken away. [12] The pants he received were tight, and the jacket had no buttons. Gever was led outside. He looked back, and with his eyes, he said goodbye to me. I could not take it. Ten minutes later, I was told to put on my jacket. Two men held me up because I could not move any part of my body. Another man was ordered to load his gun with five bullet and take care of me. I was holding on to the wall. At this moment, I was more hopeful than at any time in the past, maybe because I did not lose my will [to live]. I showed the murderous Ukrainian that I can manage. I did not fall down. I overheard them saying that once I get to the street, I'll be free. So this does not have to be my end. Holding on to the

wall, I was determined to get to the door. I was asked where I want to go: Lemberg or Kaminke. When I did not reply instantly, I received a hail of punches all over my body. I was beaten only by those who had something in their hands. They were disgusted to touch us with their bare hands. However, none of them spared me his leg kicks. Finally, half fainted, I found myself outside, in the street. The fresh Summer air filled me with joy. My ordeal lasted from seven to three o'clock. During the entire period, the windows and the shutters were closed, most likely so the people passing by would not hear the screaming. Even when the blood was oozing, they muffled our mouths with rags. I fell down a few times. I had a hard time getting up. My legs and feet were a mass, and I was forced to walk on the tips of my toes. You should know that I could not hold on to anything with the tip of my fingers [13] because they were swollen, bleeding, and burned. The murderers took a piece of wood, cut it into small pointed pieces, and pushed them under my nails. I believe they also dipped the wood in gasoline because one of them asked where is the bottle with gasoline. You can't imagine the pain I experienced. You must know that my pain was so intense that I threw myself to the floor dragging with me many of the men who were holding on to me. Many times, I and a few of the men were lying on the floor. They punctured only six of my fingers, the fingers of my left hand, and the small finger of the right hand. At the time I was also stabbed with a knife because two of the men bloodied their clothes. You must know that they were all dressed up for a holiday. The entire village was decorated with Ukrainian National flags. I noticed this in the morning, when I first entered the village. As I



mentioned earlier, the outside air refreshed me. The men escorting me was screaming at me, telling me that I should move faster in the direction of Lemberg. Both sides of the road were surrounded by a forest. Half walking and half crawling, I dragged myself across the courtyard, located on the right side of the road. It's possible that it was too far for the man to walk with me. In the meantime, it began to rain, and military trucks began to arrive from the road. The shikses [Christian women] were screaming at and singing for the troops. It's possible that one of the screaming women was a friend of the man who was escorting me because she called out to him. Further down the road, military trucks drove out from the right side of the street leading unto the main road to Lemberg. Rain was pouring, and the soldiers looked at me as if there was someone to look at. When, from the distance, the woman called to the man who was escorting me one more time, he said to me [in Ukrainian] "You dirty Jew, I don't want to see you anymore." My dear, you can imagine, I was running, if running and falling can be called running. Using my right hand, I washed my face and head with rain water. My skin was burning to the touch. Walking on the side of the road, and looking up at the top of the mountain, I saw Gever walking. A group of small bastards [children] was running after him. I have not seen Gever since that time.

Soldier sat in wagons, under covers, hiding from the rain. I decided to get over to the right side of the road where the wagon were going in the direction I was heading. The wagons on the left side of the road were going home. On the right side of the road, I could hold on to the wagon because both the wagons and I were going

very slow. One man from a wagon called me over. He asked me in German if I am a "Jude". I made believe I didn't understand, and in the loudest voice I could muster, I told him in Russian "I am going to Lvov." Thanks to God, as I repeated it twice, we approached the forest. Once we reached it, I ran, at first, slowly, then faster and faster, into the woods, like a crazy man. It's possible that my mind was not functioning normally. However, the pain in all the parts of my body reminded me that I was alive. [15] I ran until I reached an opening, then I looked back, and realized I was running without an aim, and the truth was I could not run anymore. While I was in the forest, I did not pay attention to what was around me: dead soldiers, horses lying on the ground, guns, machine-guns, cannons, bullets. I did not look at anything. I had one thought in my battered head, go on, go on, further away from the terrible place named Remenow. What I reported here is part of the troubles in the village.

KOLODENKI

When I reached Gredno, I turned left. I wanted to get to the road. The forest was small, and very soon I reached the road. Following the edge of the forest, I began to walk in the direction of Lemberg. Then crawling for a distance, I noticed the Remenow place. I recognized it because of its round roofs. Instead of proceeding to Lemberg, I returned to the village. I did not have any strength left to go on to Lemberg. I wanted to die near my parents. I consoled myself that if I have to be murdered, let it happened at

home. I was not afraid to return through the village I passed by earlier. Again I crawled to Lemberg. I could not imagine how it was possible to crawl there. I was hoping that I will find a wagon so I could get home, but no one was passing by. I saw Christians going from Kaminke but they did not recognize me. One of the men was going from Kaminke to Lemberg, carrying a package under his arm, and a bottle of tea in his hand. When I saw the bottle, I could not keep myself from asking if he could give me a drink. [16] He also did not recognize me. I told him who I was. I knew him. He was from Jagony, named Jakopszei Eloidik, but called Jakobshei Pilipkies. He was a train worker. With tears in my eyes, I asked him if I could only wet my lips. It's possible he felt disgusted to share the tea with me, or he felt like a German, in any case, he refused to give me some of his tea. Then I told him that it may happen that one day in the future he may ask me for a drink. At the time, I had no idea what the Germans had in mind to do with the Jews. And because he did not know either, he handed me the bottle. I grabbed it in my right hand in such a hurry as if the drink could put me instantly back on my feet. The person left, and I continued to crawl. Soon afterwards, I met Beile Reher with her husband. They were walking on the road back to Kaminke. They were already in the outskirts of Lemberg, but they were advised to turn back by Jewish female students fleeing Lemberg, running home to Radziechow, and Stajanow. The situation in Lemberg and all other shtetlach [townlet] was frightening. Blood was flowing like water. We decided to go back to Kaminke. However, I, Beile, and her husband did not want to go through the village. Beile and her husband were told that if they were caught there again, they

would be treated as Gever was treated. The young female students left. We went left, along the forest, so as to avoid the village. I did not want to go on the right side because that's where the train tracks were passing through, and, in addition, the area was inhabited. I did not know what was on the left side. Beile and her husband went with me. I walked slowly, leaning on a stick I found. You should know that my crawling so far did not get me too far. Now we continued walking left. We wanted to make sure that the village remained at the side of us. Eventually, we reached a road which led to Solimow, in the general direction of Zolkwia. [17] Then we began to walk in the direction of Kaminke. Having bypassed Remenow from the right side, we approached a stream with water. With the help of my two friends, I washed up a bit, and again we were on our way. Beile's husband jumped over the stream. I could not do it, so my friends helped me, and we dragged ouself over to the village of Zwertow. On the way, we drank water from the river. I took from Beile's husband a cap to cover, at least partially, my badly wounded head. [The Ukrainians] did not have enough time to completely undress Beile and her husband because of the arrival of the Germans. The [Ukrainians] had no idea about the German's position toward the Jewish question. This maybe the reason why the two were allowed to keep their clothes on. They let the boy go, and he went to Lemberg. We had many experiences on the way, and the Ukrainians decided to let us go. One of them wanted to hit us but his sister did not let him. [though the text is legible, it does not make sense within the flow of the text].

Finally we made it to the village of Kolodenki. The village was

named Klodno-Zoltance, Kolodenki - a small village near Kaminke, next to a forest. We reached the village at night. It was Summertime. It was about 10 or 11 o'clock at night. We met a Christian in the village. We asked him if he would let us sleep over the night in his home, and at dawn we would proceed to Kaminke. He did not trust us. But he told us that in the forest lives a Pole with three sons. It's possible that one of them would show us the way to Kaminke through the forest if we would pay him for it. We had no other choice but go there. Slowly, we dragged ourselves over to the house. We had no problem recognizing it. It was located on the edge of the forest. The home consisted of 2-3 individual one room apartments. The peasants gave us the right information. We found what the informant was escribing to us. [18] We noted that the proprietor of the forest home did not have a first class opinion, even though his Polish family name was very pretty. The Pole's name was Warszawski. However, in the light of the fact that we had no other choice, we went to the home. I had to have a place where I could rest my exhausted bones. I felt hot and cold, and my two companions did not let me sit down on the ground. They said that if I sit down, I would catch a cold. I looked like some one who was taken out of a river. As I approached the home, I leaned on my companions. As we climbed the home's stairs, we saw light inside. I did not like the fact that so late at night and there was still light in the house. At it became obvious to us later on, the man's two dogs woke him up earlier, and made him aware of our approach. Every night he had guests coming from the forest, especially now that the Soviets were hiding out in the forest. The Russians were

coming to the [Pole] at night, asking him to exchange military clothes for peasant. It's possible that the Pole took from the Russians guns and revolvers to hide them. In any event, we were sure that the Pole had some weapons even in regular times. Yet, nothing bad happened to us in his home. I And if God will let us live, I would like, personally, to thank the Pole for all he had done for me. Three years later, I am writing about this specific event. Today is the 16th of April, and we hear artillery fire. The fire comes from the region near Brody. It's hard to live through to the moment when I could see the Red Star [meaning the Russian army]. It's true we sinned against the Russian government. Personally, I did not do anything to feel guilty about. I lived with the Russians like one does with brothers, and when they had to leave, it hit me like a thunder in the middle of the day.

Coming into the Poles home, I collapsed on the floor like a man who was completely broken down and exhausted. In spite of the pain, I looked around. I saw the Polak and his wife in one bed, a child lying on the floor, and two people on some straw. [19] The room was small, serving as a bedroom, dining-room, and kitchen. The windows were boarded up as if outside was a thirty degree frost. I barely stood on my feet. You can imagine when I asked the Pole to let us rest for a while, and the next morning, at dawn, to show us the way through the forest to Kaminke. Then I asked the man to come outside, into the fresh air because I felt very bad. He put on a pair of pants and came out with us. Next to the home, I sat down on a stack of wood, and told the man that we don't have a penny because everything was taken away from us. However, if he would escort us to

Kaminke, he would be well rewarded for his deed. To make sure that we are from Kaminke, the man asked us question about various people from Kaminke whom I happened to know thanks to the fact that I had used to own a liquor store. The man's madam [slang for wife] and his oldest son, about twenty years old, were also present at the conference. As it happened, I knew most of the man's friends and acquaintances in Kaminke. I immediately won over the entire family, and the lady of the house brought out a bucket of milk, and we drank it. As far as bread went, they did not have any. Then they put some hay in the attic of the stable where we went to sleep. It was understood that the next morning, the man or his son would escort us through the forest and two village to Kaminke because on the main road we had problems. I immediately laid down like a stone. I could not touch any part of my body or turn for that matter. As I laid on my back, my wounds hurt me as if someone was stabbing me with knives. Some of my wounds were bleeding. But it did not take long, and I fell asleep. I don't know how long I slept. Soon, the owner of the place woke us up, and told us it's time to get on the way. [20] It was still blue [=dark] outside. It's possible that we slept all together about 2-3 hours. When the man saw my physical state in the light, he offered to hitch up a horse and wagon, and take us in a wagon. However, I could not open my eyes or mouth for that matter. In short, we told the man to hitch the wagon and take only Beile, while the two of us would remain in plce. Beile would take care of everything, and write us whether it was or was not possible to come to Kaminke. When we told Mr. Warszawski about our plan: he should take only one passenger, and leave as soon as his wife will give

Beile a handkerchief to cover her head so she would not be recognized when she reaches town, he agreed to the plan, and left taking Beile with him. Again, I fell asleep, soon to be awaken by the owner's son. Because of the unbearable pains I suffered, I could not fall asleep again. Soon, the day of waiting began. Every moment turned into days. We were very anxious to hear what was happening in Kaminke. Finally, with God's help, four o'clock in the afternoon, the Christian returned. First of all, he asked his sons to close the gate, then, slowly, he removed from the wagon an item and spread it on the ground. In the item there were about 20-30 head caps and hats covered with blood. We were watching through the cracks. He returned alone, withoutout. The wagon was filled with blood. Can you imagine, my dearest, what we lived through at the time. We knew that people were killed under every government, and here we saw a lot of hats, while the heads were already buried in the ground. Mr. Warszawski was in no hurry to come to us. First, he went to eat. When he filled himself with food, he came and told us the good news, what was happening in Kaminke since Tuesday night. [21] They caught in town, and forced him to take murdered Jews to the field. At which point he was given 30 hats. He went to the field three times. He was traveling with a small wagon. Beile wrote a note to her husband. I had no information from my home, though Beile wrote me that in ou home everything was fine. My father ran away [to hide] from home, and my mother had no patience or strength to write me. I did not know what to do next. I still could not move my hands and legs. We came to the conclusion that there was no reason to go to Kaminke. It was obvious, once we were caught, we would be murdered. So please,

how could one live with the Germans. Three years have passed since then, and today, I can say the same thing - once I am caught, I'll be shot on the spot. How sad it is. Not a nice ending for me, though there are no more Jews on the free street of the German people. My dearest, can you imagine my situation. I was physically and morally broken. At the present, I am only physically strong. All my experiences of which you will learn later in the following chapters made me stronger. [Oh I God, if I could only [survive] live through to the time when I will be able to chat about all this with my friends, and avenge, avenge my two beloved souls, my father and mother. They suffered considerably [from the hands of] our local Chriastians, well known to us. They did not let my parents alone, even though my parents never bothered anyone, nor did they belong to any organization. They were tortured for the simple reason because they were Jews. I will write about this later when I God will spare the life of my dear, only brother, and this book will get into his hands. Let him, in the name of the innocent holy God of our parents, avenge them. Avenge, and one more time avenge. You can believe [me when I tell you] that tens of thousands of young people who lost everything wanted to live for one reason only to take revenge. Yes, I can't let them catch me.

[22] And so I had to believe in the note [from Beile] even though I had no sign of life. Even though I was all broken, I had enough of understanding left to ask Mr. Warszawski to send up his wife to us. I realized that she is the type of person who would help us for money or valuables. I arranged with the woman to go specially to my [paren't] the next day, and bring me a sign of life from my

parents - meaning Friday, the 4th of July. Friday, at dawn, she went to Kaminke. I was lying on a heap of burning problems, moral and physical. The thinking was worse than the pain from the wounds. Late in the afternoon, the woman returned, and brought me a letter from my mother. The letter stated: "Motiniu [diminutive of Moti] save yourself. Here is not a place for you." Father was hiding out in Jaroni. My mother also wrote me what was happening in town. In 2-3 days, I learned from Warszawski and his wife's stories the following: "My grandfather, our dear zeidi, the one who made a living with his ten fingers, the one who suffered all his life, the one whose candles were turned over in the shepherd's synagogue because it did not fit them that a shoemaker should light candles in a shepherd synagogue, even though all that zeidi wanted was to say Kadish. He had Yiskor." The incident happened at a time that I don't remember. Class struggle. "Zeidi who did not know about any worldly things. Besides work and Beit ha-Midrash, nothing else existed for him. He never swindled anybody in his life. He was always the one who was swindled. The zeidi who worked for us. The one who every few days ran to the field [cemetery], to my grandmother, asking her that no harm should come to me. This righteous Jew was murdered in an appalling way." On the Friday [mentioned above], he was already not among the living.

Reuben (m. Leah)

death of the grandfa

[23] The Christian woman brought me a pair of pants, a shirt, and some kind of a jacket. She received from my dear mother a present. It was she who proposed especially to me, that I should remain with them a few days. I said that I can only remain on condition that my friend can stay with me. She agreed to my

proposal. I will tell you why I asked of my family to send me some money, because when they did send me 50 or a 100 rubles, the woman did not bother to give me any of it. I did not asked her about the money, even though my mother mentioned in her letter that she sent me some. Because of this, we decided that on Sunday, when the woman will go to church, she should stop and see us. I decided to ask her to get me some writing from my dear father. I was lying down when she came in. Though they gave her bread for us, the woman never forwarded it to us. What she did give us was milk. I had no appetite for any kind of food. I was satiated with problems and pain. At night, my friend washed himself up a bit. The next day, I removed my clothes, and my friend removed some gravel fragments from my back, while from the knees I did it myself. I asked Mr. Warszawski if he could spare some vodka so I could forget the pain. The woman got some vodka from my home. When the man [Warszawski] saw my situation, and was hoping to get some more [supplies] from my home, he gave me a bottle of vodka. The vodka burned out my wounds, and prevented the development of complications. In normal times, I would probably need two professors to attend to my wounds. I also attended to my head wounds. I cleaned my head, by putting vodka on a piece of linen. [Later] I used the vodka as a compress. From day to day, I got better. So much so that on Shabbat, in the evening, I crawled down from the attic, and went outside to enjoy some fresh air on that beautiful Summer night. Sunday, the woman went again to town, and again she brought me supplies from my mother. For coming to my home, they gave her a half a liter of rum for lack of something else. Because the woman was afraid that I may ask her to try some of the

Sat July 5 1941

GEVER = son in law of Meier Leibish

rum, she told me that walking home, through the forest, the bottle fell and broke.

[24] On Monday, two Ukrainian policemen came, and ordered Mr. Warszawski to return the wooden planks he took from the Doniebindik saw-mill (during the Polish rule, the mill belonged to Yankel Aksien), during the Russian occupation. He was toldto return the wood to the same place he took it from. If he will refuse to do it, they will come back and search his premises. Warszawski was worried that when they will return, they may find us. However, I persuaded the Pole that the two men will not come back, therefore there was reason for him tto worry. On Tuesday, Warszawski went with his wife to town. Again, he brought regards from home, but not from father. Bitsie Gever, the daughter of Meir Laibisz, came to us with Warszawski. She was told by my dear mother and by Beile that I am here, so she came to see me with Warszawski's wagon. At that time, Jews were not required to wear arm-bands. Betsie came with her sister Szeindl's two children from Lemberg, a red [headed] boy and a girl. During the Russian occupation, the children came to Bitsie for a visit, and found themselves caught in Kaminke by the outbreak of the war. Now, Bitsie wanted to bring the children back to Lemberg, to their parents. She also wanted to find out what happened to her husband. I could not provide her with any specific information, except for the facts I brought out in the previous chapter. Warszawski took Bitsie and the children to a Jew. It was only ten days since the Germans came in. There was still a Jewish family in the village [where I was staying], though I already knew that in the already mentioned Remenow, all the Jews were murdered. Bitsie made a

deal with Mr. Warszawski. Warszawski took them to Lemberg for some items which he was supposed to get from Szeindl's husband. I wanted to communicate with Zlata and her family. [25] Wednesday, at dawn, 7/9/41 the younger Warszawski [the son] took them [Betsi and the children] to Lemberg. He returned home late at night. He was not very happy about the fact that he went to Lemberg. I worked hard trying to persuade him to go. He was angry at me for doing it. After what my dear mother gave them for delivering a letter from Kaminke, they could not be happy, especially after what they received in Lemberg. It's possible that this fact had something to do with their decision to make us leave their place. I was told from home not to show my face there. My mother was telling me to attempt to get through to Lemberg. The Warszawski family was ready to keep me because I did not look like a Jew. But my friend they don't want to keep under any circumstances. I did not want to part with my friend. And how could I let him go all alone to Lemberg. Zlata wanted me to come to Lemberg, without telling me that all the men were hiding in all kinds of holes, and their former servants were looking for them to take them to work from where many of the Jews did not return till this very day. And here, once again, I was afraid to pass through Remenow. I did not want to go alone, and Warszawski did not want to take me by wagon because the horse just came back from Lemberg. I promised him everything but he did not want to go. I was begging him 7/10/41 all of Thursday to take me. My wounds healed quickly, thanks to grandmother's leaves, vodka, and my body's ease in which it was healing itself. Slowly, I began to stand up on my legs, but I could not touch any part of my body. I understood that I needed another

two weeks of rest, but I had no choice. In one word, I became afraid, and there is no remedy for fear. [26] I was also afraid of Remenow, and for this fear there was no remedy. It was enough, we decided that Friday, at dawn, we were leaving. I wanted to give Warszawski money to take me through the same road we came here, omitting Remenow. However, he did not want to her about it. Enough. Thursday night, we went down from our nest, and slept in the stable on a stack of hay. Around 11 or 12 at night, we were on the way. The old man woke us up. The son was our escort. I made a deal with him. For a 100 rubles, he took us to Lemberg. They did not want to hear or think about going by wagon. I wanted to make sure that when the first light came, we had passed the unfortunate place. At first, we did not walk on the road but on side paths. We wanted to do this until we reached the road leading to the main road. However, at the time, it was pitch dark, and the young Warszawski said that a military truck could pass us [and see us]. It was too early to go, he said. He was right. On the other hand, he worked so hard on me not to worry about the village that I was ready to listen to anything he had to say. He brought us to Kapice where we took a nap. When Warszawski's son woke me up, it was alrady light. "It's time to go", he said to me. "Lets go". He saw how hard it was for me to walk, but he assured me that when we reach Remenow, we will rest and then proceed to walk slowly. This added further to my fear. Thanks to God, I was walking on the tip of my toes. I wanted so much to pass the village that I was half running to get away further and as fast as possible from the village. I was upset at myself for taking a nap. As we approached the village, our escort calmed me down. [27]

7/14/41

Imagine, I was entering the village where all the Jews were murdered, though in other towns some Jews were still living. I tiptoed through the place where they made my entire body full of wounds. We passed it. I did not looked at the house where I suffered so much. I was walking in the middle, Warszawski ahead of us, and Beile's husband in the back. God helped us. We passed the village. This village was also terrible during the time of the Polish rule. Till this very day, Poles traveling with merchandise to Lemberg used to be killed passing through Remenow. The young Christian worked on me, and we passed the village. Once we were in the forest, we sat down and rested. Many former military men passed us on the road. I asked them about my beloved brother. At the time, he was near Odessa. Slowly, we moved to Zidaticze. Malach Badner Lipa, brother of the krimer [curved one] Bartner, actually his father-in-law, lived there. We stopped by. It began to rain. Our escort met a friend and joined him. We agreed to meet at Zlata's place. The escort knew where Zlata lived. He took Bitsie to Zlata's home. Here I was not afraid. At Bander father-in-law's home, I found out that Gever was handed over to the Ukrainian police near Bander's home. The soldiers who brought in Gever said that after Remenow, Christians pulled Gever out of a Russian tank from which he was shooting at the Germans. He was handed over to the Russian army. However, because the Russians were heading in the direction of Kiev, they handed Gever over to the Ukrainian police which was badly organized at the time. Can you imagine, the bandits from Remanov made Gever sit in a tank and shoot. If he had some documents, he would have been a soldier. Today, there is no need for tanks from

which to murder, one word is enough - Jew. The Jews were telling me how he begged the Ukrainian murders, how he cried to the Jews: "I am a father of small children. Save me." He surely thought that they will just execute him. The poor man was not aware what went on in Kaminke. The first slaughter of [Jews] took place in Lemberg. Gever was brought to Lemberg. This was the real Thursday. Jews were taken to their death in trucks. No one was saved by any kind of begging. This was the last information I had about Gever. Here he finished [his life] as other Jews finished theirs. But unlike others, he did not have to suffer for years. It is said that it was suffering. However, when you want to live, the suffering becomes even greater. the will to live is stronger. I am not telling you fairy tales. I felt it all on my own body. I want very much to live, and to survive so I can see the ones who remained alive [survived], and speak with them. Oh, how long I have not heard a Yiddish word.

It began to rain hard. I asked the Jew to give me or lend me a piece of roof so I could put it on my head. I did not want to be recognized. And so I walked until I reached the marmalade factory. Here I stopped for a moment. I stopped because further on they were catching people for a work detail. Then, I entered the home of Zlata. The escort was given money. Zlata gave him also a shirt, a pair of socks, and a good breakfast. Coming to Zlata, I saw what fear means. Michil was hidden under the white closet which stood in the corner of the room. The room was locked. Everything possible was done to hide him. Maybe someone is coming, maybe there is someone on the steps. The fear was overwhelming. In one word, you can imagine that I, who thought that I may be able to rest in my sister's house,

realized that under the Christian's roof, in the woods, was much more peaceful, though, the few days we lived there, we lived in fear. My friend had family in the town, but Zlata did not let him go because Jews were being caught in the street and exterminated. You can imagine that my friend was ready to return with the escort to stay in the village, and, later, continue to Kaminke. The same day I gave my friend 50 rubles. I washed myself, and went to bed. After all this time, Zlata was helping me. She put a lock on the door, and stood guard at the door. Repeatedly, I told everyone not to mention to anybody in my [parent's] home about beating, stabbing, and burning. Zlata did not know what happened to me. My mother found out about it a few months later. After a long ordeal, I was in Lemberg, in the Lemberg where I once enjoyed my sister with her two dear, never to be forgotten souls.

My dearest, believe me, I talk about it and my heart is burning. I can't believe that it was and is no more.

[30]

IV

I think July

KAMINKE

I would like to give you a short overview of events in Kaminke from the time I left home. The day I left Kaminke, on Wednesday, the 2d of April, 1941, the first Pogrom took place. I can't provide you with a completely accurate account of the pogrom, because I was not home at the time. I can only write about events which I saw with my own eyes, and experienced personally. However, I hope that a few Jews will manage to escape this horror and go abroad, or get over to the side of the Bolsheviks. Hopefully, they will know what happened in Kaminke. I am interested only in my parents, dearest friends, and family who were in Kaminke during the first Pogrom. It's about them that I want to write about.

On [this memorable] Wednesday, Jews were caught in the street, while others were dragged out of their homes. They were all brought to an area near the public bath house. In the immediate vicinity was a hat or egg store, with cncrete huts which served for canning and making lime eggs [not clear sentence in the text]. My beloved Zeidi was also taken there. At first, a German soldier caught my Zeidi, but my mother managed to talk the German into letting my grandpa go. But later, Judek Jadenecki, known as Kornik, came to our house. In the past, I had a legal run in with Kornik's brother about beating a rug [cleaning a rug]. The brother's name was Karolki Kornik who moved to Lemberg before the war. So this Judek Kornik dragged my zeidi to the "slaughter" room, and there he went on to beat him, nonstop, until he murdered him. At the same time, dozens of other

people were present in the room. It's possible that more than one person partook in the beating and murder of my zeidi. Uncle Chaim-Hirsh and uncle Meir Leibusz were also in that room. The lives of some [people] were extended for a while longer. [31] Uncle Leibusz remained alive, while zeidi and uncle Chaim-Hirsz were murdered on this unforgettable Wednesday. On Thursday, after uncle Leibusz came out of the place half alive [= half beaten to death], he told of the terrible suffering his brother and ~~brother~~ brother-in-law went through before they were murdered. He urinated into my uncle's [= his brother's] mouth to revive him. It should be noted that he was not the only one who did such a thing. The murdered people had to be removed from the room by the ones who were still alive, to make room for new victims who were coninuously brought into the room by the bandits. Many of the bandits, present at the scene of these murders, were not all Kaminke Christians. Many of the murderers were from the surrounding areas.

The same day a few Ukrainians were buried. They were shot by the Soviets for openly sympathizing with the Germans. The spirited Ukrainians laughed, and openly demonstrated in the streets. After the tumult in the street, caused by the Ukrainians, ended, the bloody Pogrom began. I don't know how many Jews were murdered at that time. The howling from the burning Jews was horrendous. The [tortured Jews] were begging for some water, but instead of water, they got stones. Jews, brought into the room, were beaten without mercy by the Ukrainians present in the room, and then thrown into the [adjoining] store. The heat in the store was unbearable because the windows and door were closed, and both were made of iron. People were piled up one on top of the other, bringing about the suffocation of the ones on the bottom of the pile. Zeidi and

Chaim-Hirsh suffered terribly till dawn of the following day. Uncle Meir Leibusz remained alive thanks to a sad misfortune. When he was brought into the room, there were too many people being beaten, as a result he was "spared" the brutal beating which in all cases resulted in death. [32] The same day, they cut off Mechil Tohen's legs right outside his home. He died at the doorstep of his home after suffering terribly for a long time. A rumor was circulated [in town] claiming that Broder, the pig slaughterer, was responsible for this orrible incident. They said that Brody, envious of Mechil's home from the prewar period, killed him when the right opportunity presented itself. Dr. Birger's, Dolek Abram bride's son-in-law, head was cut off. I don't want to go into the details [of the incident] because I did not see it.

Here it is, the terrible way the first victim, our beloved zeidi, lost his life - a life full of hardship. All his life he worked very hard and bitter, and when the time finally came to enjoy some fruits from his toil, he was robbed of the opportunity in a terrible manner.

Father was hiding on the [farm] of Anton Sztopel, in Jagonia. He survived the first day [of the Pogrom] by hiding in a stable for about six or eight days. However, at first, my father went to Heranki Ilnicki who refused to keep him. Wednesday evening, he went to Jagonia.

You should know that when the Soviets came to our town, I provided Horanki with a livelihood by getting him into the place where I and Meir were working. He was making salami and other varieties of meat products from government supplies. He did not have to buy meat. But now, when it came to help me, he refused to give my father shelter. I will mention him later in my writing. All the

murdered Jews were taken to the Holy Place [cemetery]. As I mentioned earlier, when I talked about Kolodenki, the situation in town was extremely unsafe. My mother asked Wieczorki to let her into his home, but he and his two shikses [= Christian women] refused to let her in. [33] They put into their windows Holy photograph, and lit lights, to let everyone know that here [in this household] live Christians; all others [Jews] were robbed, beaten and murdered, and their window glasses broken. Sef Jakobszej, the swine slaughterer, came to our house. He broke all all our windows, and beat up my mother. A few months later, he came again, and broke all the windows. During his visit, my father was hiding under the bed. The [Ukrainian] badly disfigured my mother's face, and, to top it off, kicked her a few time. The man was a Folk-Deutsch. My mother's suffering was indescribable. During the first eight days, many property searches were executed. The [Ukranians] were digging, stabbing, and searching in the chimney for loot. My mother was so badly beaten that it was very hard to recognize her. She turned into a skeleton. You should know that during the Russian occupation, my mother looked like a bride.

We had a short mailman who during the period of the Soviet occupation brought us mail, and perodically from from America. Every time he came to us, we treated him with vodka, and in his case, with Polish vodka. During the German occupation he came to us with Roman the shoemaker from the East. They ripped pieces of meat [= tortured her] from my mother, and beat her, demanding to know where she hid the Polish vodka. They went as far as digging up the floor in the rooms in their search for vodka. The blind chicken [referring to a woman] was also bathing herself in our blood.

Michal Krawiec was our Pesach saloon-keeper. One day, Wladek

Wotowicz, while drunk, grabbed my mother by the hand and dragged her to a community gathering. He wanted my mother should transfer the ownership of the saloon to Krawiec. My mother, from her side, wanted to leave the place to Sztopel. [35] Wladek beat her up in an attempt to change her mind. My mother told me about the beating. She said to me: "Child, if I will survive, I want to do to him what he did to me - the worst." You can imagine that our mother, who always looked aside when someone did her wrong, and never got angry at the person who did the wrong, already said what she did. She said what she did because the Ukrainian caused her unbearable suffering. Let God help me survive all this.

Michal Krawiec, the hunch man, the Pesach saloon-keeper, was always sucking blood from my parents. He became the proprietor of our saloon. He had two partners: one, Ridnik Dmitro, and his brother-in-law, Chomke Kosarowicz. Both of the partners married daughters of saloon-keepers. My father had to serve them. He used to order beer for them, sweep the rooms, and any other choirs which needed to be done. My parents were good sports about all this, as long as they were left alone. But the hunch man made their life miserable. He did not let them "raise their heads".

Szwenczicki, who was an overseer in the slaughterhouse during the Polish rule, became the town's mayor during the German occupation. He tortured our parents nonstop. Kornik, the man I mentioned during the narrative about the first day of the pogrom, was a liar and a robber. He took all the clothes from the Russian officer who lived in our house, then returned it. The blind Kaszke, or Boris Dienst, also took some of the officer's belongings. I can go on mentioning hundreds of such incidents, but it does not make any sense to do so at this point. The few incidents I already

mentioned are not very important, nor the last ones I'll mention [in my writing].

After our beloved parents were continuously robbed, without any change in site, they decided to give our belongings to Christians for safekeeping. [35] The person who hid most of our property was Anton Sztopel, the man in whose home my father found shelter for a few days. It was understood [by both sides] that there is going to be a world [peace in the world], and then the property will be returned to the owner. Sztopel transfered all the liquor, wine, hard liquor, cognac, rum to his house. The load consisted of liter, 1/2 liter, and 1/4 liter bottles, a few boxes of liquor, and a variety of other items. In addition, Anton took linens, clothes - a total of 700 items of clothing and linens, my father's fur coat, and mother's coat. It was clear that eventually he was supposd to to return all the items. We did not even keep one bottle of liquor. He took every single bttle we had. But today, I see his youngest daughter's son wearing our clothes. Everyone in Jagonia knows that he used our clothes. Various people from the police, murderers, bandits, as well as SS men we knew drank our liquor. One of the bandits, Lachman, used to sleep with Anton's middle daughter. This bandit terrorized the Jews who were still alive. He made for Anton's daughter all kinds of clothes and shoes. Even the Christians were afraid of him. He lived, as they say, like the king of France, while at the same time, we [the Jews] and our parents had no bread to eat. By that time, the bandits already finished drinking our liquor.

The second person hiding our property was Krach Poimes's son-in-law, the former City Hall worker. He took from us a chest full of mans' suits, fabrics, never worn fur coats, mine and my fathers' clothes.

The third person who took our property for safekeeping was Heranki Jonicki. He had my navy blue suit, the striped coat, the blue suit, and many other items - all in all, a chest full of clothes.

The fourth person who had taken our property, was Johan Jakacze, the secretary of the Jagania society. He too had taken quite a few things, including many pieces of our furniture. The beds and closets were taken by Joszke Szteker. Semer also took many things. You should know that our parents gave our property for safekeeping to people from Jagonia, people who were Folk-Deutsch [= supporter of Germany], and playing important roles in town. [36] Yet, how silly was the issue of property in light of what we had already lost. My beloved mother always used to write: "All this property means nothing. I want to live with just a shirt on my back, but let me survive." On many occasions, Zlata used to tell me: "I only want a dry piece of bread with water, as long as I am alive with my husband and children." How many times she used to point at her two innocent, blooming souls [children], and say: "And this is what they want to destroy." But my dear, they were destroyed, destroyed in a terrible manner - [and what was destroyed] was the best and the most beautiful. Are you aware what kind of children Zlata had? What kind of diamonds they were? Such two healthy, beautiful boys. One smatter and better looking than the other.

II All turned into a black, dark dream. They ceased to be among the living. They are not people anymore. They were extracted with the roots. Yet, in spite of al this, they wanted so much to live. In spite of the bitter times, the lust for life was and is greater than ever. They went to death with their heads high in the air. Yes, I know about Zlata's suffering till the last moment of her life. I

can't control myself. The terrible scene stands before my eyes. I must end this chapter.

I am not writing in a room, sitting at a table. I am lying on a straw covered floor, in an attic. I am writing by a light shining through a crack in the straw roof. I am listening to the explosions of artillery shells. The entire area was lit up with fire from exploding shells. But I did not see the light because I was always in the attic where it was pitch dark. Everytime I finish writing, I covered the hole in the roof with hay.

[37]

V

POGODNA STREET number 19.

I washed and shaved. It was obvious that I can't remain in Zlata's place for too long. All the Christian neighbors knew me from the time of the Ruusian ocupation whe I used to come to Zlata. I was coming with all kinds of cars and trucks. We decided that I should go over to Pepe. According to the Jewis law, Pepe's premarital agreement was not official. Originally, the premarital contract was supposed to have been signed before the Summer vacation [but war put an end to it]. When I used to come to Pepe, I used to stop by his parents home because, in the morning, Pepe was always in the synagogue. Zlata went over to Pepe to asked if I could stay in their house. Under the cover of the pouring rain, I ran the short distance from Prachtmana to Pogodna street.

Everybody was home. They were afraid to stick out their heads into the street. The [Germans] were catching Jews in the street, and

taking them to work. We put a closet against the door leading to Szlomo Barice's room. The closet was so well placed against the door, that it was impossible to imagine that there was another room behind it. Many people were hiding in the apartment, among them Josl Haberkorn's brother-in-law and sister-in-law from Zamarstinowska Street, and a Meseig. We will meet the Meseig family later on in my story. During the first few horrendous days, Meseig had to flee his apartment because his landlord was a horrid Ukrainian patriot. Because the Russians took with them the landlord, his wife decided to take revenge on her Jewish tenants.

For a few months, many people lived together in the apartment without reporting to the authorities, or taking their bread rations card, or for that matter going to a job. [38] Meseig was in the apartment for a few day, then he returned to his home. Josl Haberkorn and Szlomo Baric went to work in the water-sewage network. The job was located near the tram tracks where the bombs ruptured the water system. The job was near their homes. [At the time], the most important thing was to work so it could be reported that they were employed, and therefore, would not be caught for other jobs, who knows where. Everyday, German catchers were in the street looking for Jews.

Lonik, Pepe's brother, who worked before the war in the metal factory "Podmot", was taken back to work in the factory during the German occupation. Everybody who worked had a work card. I was the only one who was not working. I also remember how foolish Szlomo was. Though he was extremely rich, and had a lot of merchandise, he refused to sell even one item. He said: "When the war will come to an end, I'll be the biggest craftsman in Lemberg, considering all the raw materials I'll have to work with. He was envious of a co-

employee who made 27 zloty [Polish currency] more than he did for a 14 days work period. Both of them were digging ditches with shuffles.

Because I did not want to show myself to any of my acquaintances, I sat in the room of Szlomo Baric all the time. Pepe got me some books to read. I must say that this particular period was the nicest I had during the German occupation. The door [to my room] was always locked. Every minute one of the group wanted to come into my room. We were not missing fear. However, after 4 P.M. in the afternoon, when the men returned from work, all of us were more relaxed. We comforted each other, hoping that tomorrow, or the next day, help will come to us. [39] But all we heard were rumors.

While the Germans were only a few dozens of miles away from the main city where we resided, the [Ukrainians] started the first contribution action. Barrels of kerosene were placed next to all Jewish holy places, temples, and Beit Midrashim [Orthodox study room]. Once it was done, the [Ukrainians] demanded from the Jews contributions [money], otherwise all the religious sites will be burned to the ground. The town [the Jewish community] was in total chaos [= to Yiddish expression: things were happening on tables and chairs]. The Jews gave money as it was demanded, yet, the [Ukrainians] went ahead and torched all the [Holy] places. I don't have to get into great detail when writing about this. I am sure the historians will describe the incident of the contributions in minute detail. At the time, Zlata had 10,000 rubles in cash. Obviously, the money was not hers, father gave it to her. The Germans were exchanging rubles into marks [at the rate of 10 rubles to 1 mark]. Zlata remained with a 1000 marks. During this period, a bundle of parsley was 1 mark, and 1 kg. of potatoes was 3 marks. Mechil gave a

contribution of 3000 rubles, and Zlata gave a mere 2000. Szevie Haberkorn, who was penniless, gave a contribution of the only 1000 rubles she had to her name. At the end of the contribution action, Zlata, Szevie, and Laicia Baric had no cash on hand. Szlomo was penny-pinching even during the good times. However, after the contributions, he had only merchandise, no cash. A large part of his merchandise was at Laicias' parents home in Zloczew. It's most likely that by this time most of the food stuff was already spoiled. And the merchandise he had at home could not be made because he had no acquaintance whom he could trust with the goods. Jews did not walk in the streets except to and from work, while we were hiding in his room.

Around this time, my beloved sister sold her first gift which she received from Mechil - a gold bracelet. She got 700 marks for the bracelet. She used the money to buy one cubic meter of potatoes.

Our parent sent us from home packages of foodstuff. However,the person who brought us a package, took for himself a large part of it and the better items in it. The Christians refused for any form of payment to [take the chance] deliver packages for the Jews. It was so bad that they were even afraid to enter a Jewish home. I asked my beloved mother not to sent us any more packages. I realized that it was extremely hard to find someone from Lemberg who was ready to deliver a package to our home. And even when someone was found, he wanted to be paid with a variety of food products for the delivery. Our parents were always under the impression that their food packages arrived in one piece. What they did not know that the raging hunger made people act toward each other without mercy. Once the parents sent us 2 loafs of breads (made by Christians), weighing about 4 kg. each. The person delivering the breads, replaced my

parents' breads with bread distributed by the Germans. I immediately recognized that they were not Kaminke bread. However, there was nothing I could do about it. Once, a man delivering packages took all the packages for himself, claiming that they were taken from him by force. So as you can see, we did not live in luxury. The situation deteriorated to a point that we slept later, got up later, just so we would eat later. Two days a week we fasted hoping that God will help us. I ate in Pepe parent's home. Zlata was also there. She did not want to wander in the streets while bringing me food. However, I ate little of what Zlata brought. I always ate Chaim's, Lonia's or Pepe's father food because they all happen to work. Looking at me, Pepe also did not want to eat. With great effort, I took something to eat. In any case, I was fasting a little bit. Mother came to see us on three different occasions. At the time, It was very dangerous to travel on the roads. Yet, everytime mother came to us, I was overjoyed. We talked nonstop. We just could not finish our chat. My mother was continuously worried. They should not see me, or hear me talk. She was saying: "You should take care of yourself so nothing should happen to you." [41] These were the worries of my beloved parents. And when I told my mother, "go mother, Zlata is waiting. Tomorrow you have to return home." She used to reply: "I go to sleep, and where is my child sleeping. My dear Meiriniu [diminutive for Meir], does he have with what to cover himself? Are you healthy? He is still so small. Will he be able to manage in the world." My father was telling me that at home my mother was crying day and night, wanting to know if her children have what to eat. Father was trying to comfort my mother by telling her that my friends, the ones who remained at home, were all murdered. However, it did not help my dear mother. She continued to

cry day and night. She also had terrible nightmares. She used to wake up in the middle of the night, crying out: "Where are my children? With whom did I remain? Where is my dear son Meiriniu? He was always singing for me, and made us happy. He was always hungry for life." Oh my beloved mother, how I understand you. Who else but a mother could feel this, a mother who was robbed of her children.

Oh how different was the situation a few months ago. How happy and joyful were our lives then. And at present? You were right my beloved mother, at present we don't have the dearest, most beloved family. We were torn apart from each other, and scattered. But dear mother, till this very day, I am drinking from this bitter cup, and it clear that I have not finished drinking from it. As I am writing these words, tears flow from my eyes, and my heart is bleeding. Oh how much I would like to meet my brother, my Meiriniu, and, at least, tell him all this, and hug him to my heart. Because of all this, I don't care about life, and about what I lived through. You will understand when you'll read the following chapters.

Whenever Zlata came to see me with Abish [Abe, her son], I used to hide. I was afraid he may talk about me to strangers, like children usually do. You must know that they were looking for me. Repeatedly, Zlata was visited by many Ukrainians who were looking for me. They wanted money. You, my dear brother, you knew especially well the Lemberg bandit, the "well known acquaintance" Mishke, who married one from the Lanes family. Wasil Demczine made me into a leader [during the Russian occupation]. Furthermore, he told the Lanes all kinds of stories about me, including one where Mishke and his bandit friends supposedly came looking for me. Because of the searches, Zlata refrained from coming over too often. As I mentioned earlier, everytime Abe came, I hid myself. Everytime someone went to

open the door, I waited for Zlata to tell me whether she came with the older or younger son. When it was the older boy, I immediately hid in the attic, or in the bed, covering myself, or in the closet. My heart was hurting evrytime I had to hide myself from Abe, the boy for whom I would give anything he just should feel good. Yet, in this situation, I had no other choice. I was hiding from Abe, and for weeks, observed him from a distance. I looked at his glowing face. Zlata's second son was small. He was smart like the day [local, Polish expression]. When he was two years old, he watched over his mother. He understood what we were going through because of the Germans.

Right before R Yom ha-Kodesh, Mechil began to work as a brick layer in the city's slaughterhouse. Until that time he did not work. He was hiding out. He did not want to work because on two separate occasions, when he went to work for the army to load wood and stones, thirty people were killed with wood and stones. The soldiers were bandits. The following day there were more victims. Thanks to God nothing happened to Mechil. However, after this incident, he decided against going out to work. [43] The present job in the slaughterhouse was: one, in close proximity to his home, and two, Mechil worked with many Christians whom he knew personally. From time to time, the Christians gave him a piece of liver or lung, or even a piece of meat.

R On Yom ha-Kodesh, Mechil did not work. He had a Minian [10 men required by Jewish law for prayer in a group] in his home, and he was leading the prayer. As usual, I did not leave the house. The same day, a regular army soldier from the front went from one Jewish home to another, demanding from every Jew watches, chains, rings. He was only intereted in gold items. He happened to be a jewelry

expert.

We lived here until the month of November. The winter frost came much earlier that year.

During this period, on numerous occasions, plans for a ghetto were drawn up. Quite a few people [Jews] moved out of the streets in the center of the city to the "designated" ghetto quarter. However, as soon as Jews moved from their homes, the plans for the physical location of the ghetto were changed. The sole purpose of changing the ghetto's location was to have the Jews shlep their belongings from place to place. On all bridges in Krajcigon Street stood groups of robbers waiting for Jews. Robing of Jews went on nonstop.

Szlomo Baric's stepmother carried bundles of household items from Koscielna Street to Szlomo's home on Pogodna Street. During one of her trips, the Christians took from her a basket of linens and gave her 3 zloty for it. From time to time, ordinary citizens stood in the street robbing the Jews. Nobody paid any attention to the robberies because the victimized by passers wore arm bands. By that time all Jews were required to wear arm bands. Only a person who at one time wore a patch on his arm can know the horrible feeling that goes with it. We [referring to Jews] on Pogodna Street decided to hide the more valuable items from our household. Everyday, we were robbed, and our homes were searched. Goods were taken for the army irrespective of what it was. [44] In one word, they were just taking. In an attempt to do something about it, we decided to hide part of our household goods. In the home of Yosl Haberkorn, we built a double wall in the attic, and in the closet where we hid Zlata's and Laicia's best items. We always thought that the next day will bring with it an end to the slaughter. We did not know that this was only the beginning. The three apartment owners agreed to hide in the

hiding place items which they would not need to remove for any amount of money. It was decided that in case there would be a need to leave the apartment, all the items would remain hidden, and thats how it was done. All items packed with moth balls were deposited into milk cans. I did all the technical work. At the end everything was put away into the hideout. During the time we lived in this apartment, we opened the attic only on one occasion. Pepe took out a piece of fabric, good for a Summer coat, and traded it for potatoes and wheat flour, while uncle Kver put into the hideout his sheep coat. Szlomo Baric put in the hideout 70% of his property. When the hideout was still open, Szlomo, with great difficulty, pushed in his geese feather quilt. There was barely room for it. Szlomo's Laicia begged him to leave it out, but Szlomo did not want to hear about it. He insisted that one quilt was enough for them. Unfortunately, later on, when he badly needed another quilt, it was too late to do anything about it. Also Zlata hid a small fortune in the hideout. She even put her two wedding rings into the pocket of Mechil's sheep coat. I can't list here all the beautiful and best items which they hid away in the hideout. At a later date, we found no sign of the items. As we were about to leave the apartment, Mechil wanted to open the hideout and take out some items. However, Szlomo Baric did not want to hear about it. He said that he would rather beg than drag the items with him. He won the argument. [45] We left everything in the hideout till this very day. Had we known what kind of problems we would have had because of the items in hiding, we surely would have taken them with us as we left.

We were very badly affected by the events which occurred on the day we were supposed to move to the Jewish quarter. Both sides of the streets were lined by SS men and the Ukrainian police. Trucks

arrived at Samojele Street, and properties from the [Jewish] apartments were loaded on the trucks. Later on a rumor spread that whoever would be found in his old apartment after a half an hour would be shot. Later on in the day, another rumor was spread claiming that whoever would not move out within the allotted time would be allowed to take along only 50 kg of his household goods. At this point, no one cared for their property. Everyone wanted to escape this madness with only his life.

See Katan p.38

Szlomo Baric sold already his beds, and closets. The rooms in his apartment were empty. I did not go to Zlata. All kinds of people were robbing her apartment. An Ukrainian policeman took all of Zlata's furniture and the better items in the apartment. In the apartment where I was staying, all kinds of people came and took whatever they wanted. Hania, Zlata's former servant, was also taking items for herself. Imagine, the servant was supposed to take over the apartment after we left it. Mechil went with two wagons of wood and coal to the new apartment. The wagons [with the coachmen] came back. However, Mechil and Szlomo Baric were forced to hide out because the [Germans] were catching Jews for work details. Many people never returned from such work details.

Imagine, in all this [madness] Zlata was standing with her two children, while a policeman demanded from her two down quilts which had to be delivered to his apartment by 4 PM that afternoon. If she does not deliver, he would not let go of the Christians who was delivering his furniture. The Christian had on his wagon five cubic meters of potatoes which he was about to deliver to Zlata's new apartment. Zlata asked the Christian to take Mechil's best wagon for the five cubic meters of potatoes. My beloved sister brought the younger son to me, and took the older son with her. She ran to

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Damarstinowska Street, to Mesigs, where she took a few quilts for the bandit. We met this bandit at a later date, and once again he robbed us.

Our apartment was in an uproar.* Anybody who liked something in our apartment could just take it. What was sad about all this was that no one paid any attention to what was happening. What was important to us was to save what little coal, wood, and foodstuff we had left. Zlata was exchanging everything for food. It looked like it was going to be a harsh winter. The deadline for leaving the quarter had come.

*See Kalina p 38

I believe it was the 10th or 11th of November, 1941. We saw blood [a Yiddish expression] till we reached the new apartment. Recently, Zlata changed her large apartment for our two room apartment. We needed room for thirteen people: Szlomo Baric's father and stepmother, Szlomo with Laicia, Yosel, Szevi, Pepi, Lonik Haberkorn, Mechil and Zlata, [Zlata's sons] Abish and Elisz, and for me. All the firewood and coal was put in the kitchen for lack of any room or closet. The basement was full of water, a meter deep. Yosel Haberkorn also changed his apartment. During the time he stayed with us, he put a border in his apartment. The name of the border was Piotrowski, and his brother lived in Zlata's apartment. Yosel's apartment was near Kaszczarna Street. Because we all wanted to be together, Yosel leased his apartment to Piotrowski for 500 zloty. [47]

We were happy to have a place where we could take our belongings. There were many Jews who had no apartment of their own. The Christians had to leave their apartments, while, at the same time, we were leaving our apartments to reach the apartments which the Christians were vacating. The was only one basic difference, the

Christians were not threatened by the Germans with sanctions. When it came to the actual exchange apartments, the Christians were asking whether the Jewish apartments had gas-electricity-water or bathrooms. The Christians wanted comfort. Jewish apartments which had all the comforts were hard to find. You should know that Zlata's former servant Hania had a one room apartment on the other side of Znieszenie, after the railroad tracks. Yet, Hania did not want Zlata's entire apartment with the remaining kitchen and other furniture, pictures, etc.. She wanted an apartment with comfort, so she took the hand money [bribe] but did not carry out the apartment. Why not? She and her husband were both Ukrainians, and her brother-in-law used the money right away to sent his two sons to Germany. Zlata was paid 800 zloty for all the furniture and household items which remained in the apartment.

The entire family Eizen meaning Mendel and Ester, Chaim Katz, Hersz Leib Sztrasler, Chanele, Pardes, Yosel Eizen were all living on this side of Znieszenie, after the tracks. The Jews were exchanging apartments with the Christians. In most cases, they knew the Christians who were moving into their former apartments. There would not be enough place in this notebook if I were to list all the people from Pogodna Street. At this point, I want to provide you with an overview of the situation, and mention the people who are important to me. I hope I will succeed in writing it all down. We have lived through a variety of events. Here, I want to mention only one of them. We were told on Shabbat that the following day, on a Sunday, I believe it was the 9th of the month of AV [the Jewish holiday of Tisha be-Av], was Petlura's [a cruel, Ukrainian gang leader who carried out his attacks on the Jews in the region of Galicja during WWII. On his Yor Zeit [memorial] the Ukrainians

July 28th 1941 9th Av

planned to slaughter Jews. The prediction became a fact.

We, meaning Yosel, Szlomo, Loniek, their neighbor Eizenberg, his son Mendel, and I hid in a small wooden shack, in the home of a Christian who lived near Yosel Haberkorn. [48] We arrived in the place at 3 AM at night, summertime, in the month of AV [August]. The courtyard was inhabited only by Christians. We had no other chice but remain quiet through the entire hot day, until 9 PM at night. The proprietor gave us the key to the shack, and Szeve closed us in from the outside. While I was in the shack, my stay there was pure torture. However, today, while looking at the ordeal in retrospect, it was a playtime for me. Though I was not free throughout this period, I lived in an apartment, among people. I could cough, and even moan. But when I was locked in the shack, finding myself in such circumstance for the first time, the ordeal eemed very hard on me. The same woman who let us hide out in the shack, later on did not permit any Jew to hide out in her place for any amount of money. The [Christian] family who sheltered us was named Zaba. They were originally from Bataticze. They had a son, a university professor. During the Russian occupation, the son traveled to Moscow. The war broke out while he was en route to Moscow. His old mother was worried. All she wished for was to live to the day when she'll be able to see her only son. Its possible that the concern for her son, influenced her decision to take us in. But later on she could not be persuaded to change her mind.

Yes, Pogodna Street. From all the hardships I experienced during the period of the German occupation, it was here on Pogodna Street that I had the nicest time, relatively speaking. Though I must add, it was very hard for a free man to adjust to such circumstances. Yet, it was the sweetest time. We were still all alive. Do you know

what it means to be alive. Already at that time thousands of Jews were not among the living. I still had parents, a sister, a brother-in-law, two small beloved diamonds [nephews], and Pepe. Everybody had the right to breath, to look at oneself, from time to time to laugh, and, of course, always to cry. We cursed the moment we remained alive at the onset of the German occupation. Had we known then what we knew later, we would have escaped to Rumania, or Hungary. We were told that for money one could flee to there. Yet, how tragic it was that the Jews in Hungary, most likely, were not doing any better than the Jews in Poland, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany, etc.. [49] As I write these words, the Germans were marching into Hungary. Soon the German bandits would show the Hungarians what kind of suffering they were cabable of inflicting. The Jews who fled Poland knew the suffering under the German yoke.

It's April 24, 1944. We have been under the German occupation for about four years. I found a piece of old newspaper from which I got a lot of information. Dearest living family, its near yet its far away. I still have hope that I'll survive, though nothing changed in my situation. If I am caught, I will be shot. the same regime of bandits is still at the helm of power.

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VI

Bilenkiewicza Street - or the Jewish quarter.

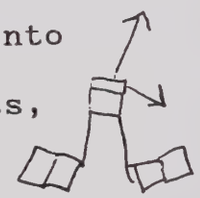
[49] The rooms in Yosl Haberkorn's apartment were already empty. I was the last one to leave Pogodnia Street. On the day we were moving, there was no snow. As a matter of fact, it warmed up a little bit. The melting snow added to the number of muddy puddles. Toward the evening, Pepe came to get me to move to the new apartment. Zlata together with the children and Mechil were all already in the "new" place. The following people were present in the new place: Szlomo, his wife and parents, Yosl Haberkorn with his wife and children. Both I and Pepe waited until became dark outside before we began walking toward the new apartment. At the time, I did not have an arm band [yellow arm band worn by the Jews], and Pepe pulled off hers. And here we were walking. I was in the street for the first time in about five months. While I was residing on Pogodnia Street, I did not dare to venture beyond the doorstep of the apartment. For the first time in my life, I was on this side of Dnieszenie, meaning on the other side of the railroad tracks. The tracks led from the train station Podzamcze to the oil refineries, and the city's slaughterhouse, as well as to the can factory "Raiker". What this meant was that the Jews could not live on this side of the tracks, [50] and the area on the other side of the railroad track became the Jewish quarter. Hersz Laib Sztrasler who had a home on this side of the tracks, had to exchange it with someone residing on the other side of the tracks at the time when the Jewish quarters were established.

When I first reached the new apartment, I did not enter it right

away. I waited outside in the street until the former owners of the apartment eventually left. I did not want they should see me. I listened to my mother's advise, and as of this day, thanks to God, everything has been as my mother has wanted it to be. Mother insisted that I don't show myself to anybody if possible. However, if it's not possible, then only a few people should know about me. I have adhered very closely to my mother's advice. On more than one occasion, I hid in the closet so as not to be seen by the former owners of the apartment.

Zlata brought with her the kitchen credenza, as well as the white linen closet where I used to hide. I also was hiding out in the home of one of our neighbors - family Teper.

The home [where we were residing at the time] had two apartments on both sides: on one side, a room and a kitchen, and on the other side a room and a kitchen. The doors of the two apartments led into a small hallway with three doors. Two doors led to the apartments, while a third door led to a room with a tiny kitchen. From the kitchen, using a ladder, one could climb to the attic, or, using the staircase, go down to the basement. In addition, there was an apartment between the two larger apartments. The apartment was occupied by the Teper family. Actually, it was only a woman with two daughters. The older daughter was about eight or nine, and the younger one about six or seven years old. Their apartment had a door to our place. Though the door was always closed, it was not locked. We removed the door handle, but whenever I needed to go over to the apartment of the Tepers, the door handle was ready, close to the door, from our side of the door. Near the door stood a bed in which Zlata and the children slept, and in the other, I and Mechil. In the same room, along the opposite wall, stood two more beds. Szlomo and



his father slept in one bed, while Pepe and her mother in the other one. At night, in the middle of the room, pillows were added to the coach where Laicia Boric with her mother-in-law slept. [51] Lonek Yosel slept in the kitchen on a bunk-bed. I described the apartments in detail because the circumstances at the time dictated the arrangement of the apartment. In the winter we had snow on the walls of the apartment. The snow on the exposed wall of the apartment was always 2 to 3 cm thick, while the wall where Zlata was sleeping was dry because it was an inside, middle wall. The kitchen walls were black, and constantly dripping. In addition, the kitchen was filled with coal and wood. What I had given you is an overview of the apartment where we were residing. The apartment was always cold irrespective whether you heated it or not. The place was cold, dark, with ice on the walls.

The first thing I did, when I got to the apartment, I hugged Abish [Zlata's son] to my heart. The apartment was quite dark, even though it had 11 candles burning. We had no electricity in the apartment. We just had to do without it. The former apartment owner was a frequent guest in our home. All the time she was bleeding us of items. Her thirst for our belonging could not be satisfied. Furthermore, she was a nonstop talker. Whenever the former landlady used to come, I used to hide out in the closet, in the attic, or on the steps to the basement because the basement itself was filled with water [about one meter]. The door to our apartment was always closed. At first, when the landlady came for a visit, I was hiding, but later on when I realized that her visit were long, I used to run over to Mrs. Teper, next door, where I was confined by space, and could move around. Occasionally, the lady finished her visit in our apartment, and then stopped by at the Teper place. I used the time

it took Mrs. Teper to open the door, to sneak back into our apartment through the connecting door. I always kept the door handle on my person.

As I mentioned earlier, Mechil worked in the slaughterhouse, Szlomo worked at his profession in the fur cooperative, Yosl Haberkorn worked for a Christian, named Benbenko, from the Pogodnia Street. [52] The Christian had a horse and a wagon, and Yosl was his coachman. Though Yosl worked for the Christian for ten weeks, he still could not get a formal certificate that he was employed. Fortunately, everytime they traveled together, they were not stopped by the Germans nor checked for proper identification. They were making good money, and, as you know, money was in short demand for some time now. Yosl was making money by going to the marketplace, and moving people from the Christian streets. Everyday he made good money from which he made a good living. Lonik worked in a metal factory. I continued to listen to my mother's advice and stayed indoor so no one will see me.

The day after we moved to the new place, all four men went to work. I and a man in the large apartment next door were not working. We stayed home. Both of us were in a terrible situation. At the time the man moved into the apartment we did not know that he and I saved ourselves together from the murderous hand [of the Germans]. Only through a casual conversation in the basement, as we were hiding, did we realize that I and he were two out six persons who came out alive from a terrible situation, but I will write about this later on. I began to eat my sister's food because Zlata absolutely did not want me to eat at Pepe's parents. You should know that Zlata had stored a considerable amount of food supplies. She had enough flour, potatoes, beans, and onions. She prepared everything because

everyone was saying that no Christian will be able to enter the Jewish quarter. She had over 20 liters of oil, chicken fat, butter, and all other foodstuff we may need. Somehow, we secured some food supplies. What we could not secure was our lives - for no money in the world. My next door neighbor, across the hall, moved in only a few weeks ago.

[53] At the time, I had the greatest satisfaction from the two lovely, sweet children. I did not need anything else. They were substitutes for everything. The world I had lost, I found it in the children. The time moved on without delays. Zlata's children sat with me all the time, so did Tepers' two children.

Soon, the fur Action began. The Jewish police ran from door to door, searching for furs. In addition, a public announcement was issued stating that the Jews could not have any clothes made from furs. And anyone holding on to fur items or, for that matter, clothing with fur trimmings, after the end of the Action, would be punished by death by the Germans.

Both my sister and Szlomo had no furs. They hid it in the hideout. What we did have were two short fur coats: one Mechil's, and the other mine. My parents sent a fur coat from home. Abish [Abe, Zlata's son] had a fur coat as well. During the Russian occupation, uncle Chaim-Hersz made for [Zlata's] child a full size child size fur coat. Zlata's son had also an unfinished fur coat - the fur patches were not sawn together. During the Action, Zlata gave in Mechil's old hat and a pair of old fur gloves. Shlomo gave in a fox fur, while Sheva gave nothing. The moment the Action began, we took some pieces of clothing to our Christian neighbors: Rzadkowa and Bobe. Mechil gave the neighbor his fur coat. Some Christians remained living in the area even after the Jewish quarter was

established. Right away, I thought of bartering the furs. The Jews could not own sweaters, pullovers, or woolen gloves. It hurt our hearts to barter the children's furs, as well as Mechil's a sweater, and my fur coat. However, during the Action, we did not barter because the items were almost of no value. Later on, when we wanted to sell items, we had to show the buyer the merchandise, and the Christian did not want to go back and forth to the Jewish homes.

[54] In the new apartment, we made a hide out in the basement. The hideout in the basement looked as follows: because the basement was divided into compartments filled with water, we decided to turn one of the sections into a hiding place. We dropped into the water filled compartment a few boxes, and crates which Mechil used to transport coal. Over the boxes and crates, we constructed a wooden structure forming a platform. The platform, in turn, was covered with straw, and another layer of planks. When necessary, we crawled over the planks from the staircase steps to the platform located in the water filled compartment. The last person to crawl over to the platform, pulled the first and the second plank unto the structure, making it impossible to get to the platform because, during the winter months, the place was filled with over a meter of water. We kept here are holdings. It's here that I bartered items of clothing for wheat, flour, the children's and Zlata's fur coats, and Mechil's sweater which Zlata knitted with her own hands. I traded all these items for flour. I did all the bartering only with one Christian. The Pole's name was Kozar, from the village of Prosa, near Lemberg. I used to give the Pole the items and some money. The Pole took the items home, and only later on returned with the flour. I did the trading because Mechil was always at work. The Christian was from a village not known to me, and he did not know me. Another reason why

I did the bartering because I knew the Christian mentality from the period before [World War two]. I made good deals with the man. As I bartered the sweater, I asked the Christian not to resell it, to hold on to it. I planned, after we survive this ordeal, to repurchase it. the man wore the sweater throughout the entire winter, and he did not sell it.

[55] Soon we had our first misunderstanding. Sheva was screaming: "If I had my things from the attic [everybody hid his belongings in the attic], I would have had with what to barter. As it is, I have nothing". Shlomo sold Laicia's an exclusive fur coat, and there was nothing else to exchange. All what remained to do was to go back to the attic and reopen the hideout. However, because of the fur Action which was taking place at the time, we were happy that we did not have the important furs with us, and that they were hidden in the attic. From that point onward, Sheva constantly complained that she would die of hunger because she had very little or nothing to eat. She continued to complain until the 1st minute of her life. She made her husbands' and children lives miserable. Yet, she was a very devoted wife. She always made sure that her husband should not be i need of anything. This was the reason for her unusual behavior.

Everytime it snowed, the special Jewish police appeared in the Ghetto, rounding up Jew for snow removal. Women with little children were released by the chief of police. I had my hideout [in the basement] which I called the Robinson Crusoe's island after I pulled in the two wooden planks unto the platform [making it into an island].

All working men had certificates which they posted on the doors of their residence. The document informed everybody that here resides an employed person.

On two different occasions, I was caught off guard when the Jewish police came to the Ghetto to round up Jews for the forced labor camps. It happened in the evening, and no one expected it. I had no place to hide. The policemen who found me, never saw me in their lives before that time. I spoke Polish to them. Pulling off the bed cover from Zlata's bed, I wanted to give the policemen the impression that I was buying the bedspread from the Jews. The policemen did not make any inquiries whether I was a Jew. later on, when I and the policeman met in the street of the Ghetto, we both had good laugh about the incident. [56] I could write a few extra chapters about the problems the Jewish police caused in the Ghetto, but I will leave it to others to do that. At another time, the Jewish policeman came while I was visiting my next door neighbor's apartment. I jumped out the window and ran away from the policeman. During the winter months of 1941-1942, I suffered quite a lot from the Jewish policemen.

Once, a policeman walked into our apartment while I was sorting potatoes. Zlata threw on top of me the bed spring and the mattress. It so happened that we kept the potatoes under the bed. There was no time for me to run away. Fortunately, Yosel Haberkorn was resting on the bed in the kitchen, and the policeman checked his documents first. While this was going on, Zlata threw the bed spring on top of me, and made the bed. It was early in the morning. The men just left for work. At the time, Yosel Haberkorn was not working for the Christian because the season for moving came to an end, and during the winter, the Christian did not want to keep the horses. The policeman arrested Yosel, and took him to the police station. Later on in the day, they released Yosel because for the time being they did not need anymore men. During this time, people were sent to a

camp in Wilinka, near Lemberg. They went to the camp and were never heard from again. Shortly afterwards, through a connection, Yosel got a job in a wooden shoe factory. We were lucky that Yosel found a job so fast, otherwise we would not have heard the end of it from his wife and his children. In the factory, Yosel continued to work with horses. This was good for him. The Germans were constantly stealing goods, and Yosel was delivering them to their homes. They always gave him some money for the delivery. After Yosel got the job, his wife quieted down.

And then, the season for potato deliveries began. [57] Everyone received potato cards. Fortunately for us, everyday, Yosel brought home some potatoes. All of us were ecstatic when Yosel brought home money, because when he came home empty handed, Sheva was loosing her sense of humor. Now that Yosel was bringing home money, Sheva did not complain when I was bartering clothing from the attic.

Sheva was not bothered by events which we heard were taking place around us. One man sold a seal fur coat. Later on, the man who bought the coat informed on the Jewish seller, who in turn was arrested. Also Yitshak Krac, a Jewish policeman from Lemberg, who sold a fur coat in Kaminke (the fur coat was for the Kaminke commander, a well known SS man, wearing civilian clothes. The man is in his post till this very day) was ordered to be arrested by the SS man who bought the coat, and brought to Kaminke. Other Jews who were connected to the sale of the fur coat were also arrested. Among the people who were arrested were: 1. Meir Lindworm, the tailor who made the lining for the coat; 2. Berl Lafajawka because he made the fur coat; 3. Meir the short one, the president of the Judenrat [Jewish self-government during the German occupation in Poland in WWII] who used Jewish community money to purchase the coat; 4. and Matias

Barau who sold Yitshak the fur coat. One should remember that it was the same commander who gave Matias a permit to legally travel to Lemberg; and the 5th person was Krac. The men were taken by the SS to the town of Sokol and were never seen again. I could have told Sheva these and hundred of similar stories. But Sheva still kept her ground. The stories did not bother her. What kept her back and had the greatest influence on her was the fact that we were together. We cooked in one kitchen. The situation in the kitchen where two women cooked was best known by the women in the kitchen. Had Sheva been alone in the kitchen, she would have been a rich person, but because she was with another woman, she felt poor. I could not describe here what we lived through at the time. [58] There were times when we asked God to burn down the entire house with all the holdings in it just so the arguments would stop.

In the meantime, another German decree was issued: The Jews could no return to their previous residences. Jews who only partially moved out of their permanent homes, eventually returned to their old residences. [The new decree made it illegal to do this.] For example, Mrs. Tepper, whose husband was caught by the Jewish police and sent to a forced labor camp in Korowice, near Zloczew, did it. Her parents and two sisters always resided on Tokarzewskiego Street, while Mrs. Tepper was renting an apartment above that of her parents. [When Mrs. Tepper moved to the ghetto], the parents remained in their old apartment. The Tepper belongings were hidden partly under the closet in the new apartment, and partly in the old apartment. There were quite a few Jews who were in such a predicament. The Christian who resided in Yosel Haberkorn's apartment had to move back to his own apartment. This meant that the Jew who lived in the Christian's apartment had also to move out. So

when Yosel's apartment remained empty, he let his Christian friend, a coachman from the same shoe factory, to move into it. When Piotrowski [the Christian] moved out, we could have removed the items hidden in the apartment because for a short span of time no one occupied the place. However, at that specific time, a terrible German Action was carried out against the Jews.

We always thought that the younger people were taken to Germany to work, while the older ones were murdered in Lemberg or Belzec. At times of Actions, no one had any desire for material things. At the time of the Action, I did not work yet, neither did I have any documents. I always had to hide out. The searches for Jews by the Jewish police were not too dangerous. In the first place, I would try, in anyway possible, to escape. And even if they would catch me, I planned to get away from them. The Jewish police had no weapons. However, the last German Action was not a joke. During the action, the SS men walked together with the Ukrainians and Jewish police. At the time of the Action, the water in the basement dried up, and nothing remained of our island. One could walk into the compartment in the basement. The only thing which could happened was that the shoes picked up mud. However, the Ukrainian bandits did not care for their boots because they robbed the boots from the Jews. During this time, a few illegal persons were hiding out in our home: Shlomo's parents and Mechil's mother, as well as one of our neighbors, a lady named Rab and her daughter. The lady's husband, after hiding out throughout the winter, began to work. Mr. Rab worked on Liczakower Street where his family used to live before the war. In addition, lady Gold with her sister, Pepe and I made up the nine people who were hiding in our building.

Mechil, Shlomo, and I built another hide out. The hideout looked

as follows: the hideout was located in the basement, under the staircase. In order to make the hideout, we removed the last few wooden steps leading into the basement, and replaced them with a small door, a door which could be closed only from the inside. [The door led to the hideout which located in the space under the staircase]. In the space under the staircase we built three benches on the three available walls. Here hid all the women and Shlomo's father. The wooden planks we used for the benches were old, black, and warped from contact with water. They came from the platform we built in the basement compartment. The little door was cut out from two long planks. The door fitted with the rest of the wood like the wooden square on a chess board. The hideout was well built. Personally, I had my own, special hideout, where no one else could stay. I used to push myself into the baking oven. The door to the oven was near the floor. I used to slid into the oven, feet first, so my head was always near the door. Then with great difficulty, I pulled my hands into the oven, and place them under my chest. At the end, I pulled in my head, with great difficulty, and there I was lying down in the oven. But before getting into my hideout, I first made sure that everyone was in the hiding place, [60] and the door was closed. I gave everyone a light, matches, and told them to move around as long as they did not hear people walking above them. However, I told them that the moment they hear any noise, they should refrain from talking. The ones who remained upstairs in the apartment were very quiet so as not to frightened the people hiding under the stairs. Ester's small Abish and two other boys wandered in the streets. No one knew that they were Jews (they did not wear armbands). The moment they saw something, they immediately informed us: [The Germans or Jewish police] "are in the streets. They are

already on our street". We happened to live on the edge of a field. Facing our window was a potato field. We also had a Jewish policeman who lived two apartments down from us. He never took part in the Actions because he was part of the criminal section. Periodically, in our area, robberies and terrible incidents took place. This was one of the reasons why the Jewish police had a special criminal section. We got along nicely with a few families on our street, and for that reason, we always had two bottles of vodka and a bite of food to go with it. You must believe me that we did not eat the food that we kept for entertainment. We had to entertain the murderers [referring to the local Christian population]. In one of the neighboring homes lived Senie Neihahoz. Before the war, he owned a bakery near the railroad tracks. His wife was from the family who owned the Friedhoffer bakeries. Senie took over one of his father-in-laws' bakeries. Arnold, the Hungarian, a former partner of Senie, lived with his wife and children in the same house with Senie. During this period, foreigners did not wear armbands. The Hungarian and his family constantly wandered through the streets, and among the street they wandered on was our gesel [little street]. all the time. As I mentioned earlier, our street was close to the field. Everytime the bandits arrived on our gesele, Arnold's children let us know about it. [61] The bandits were dragged into our new apartment [fed and made drunk with vodka] so when they eventually left our apartment, they did not return to search the place again. The bandits used to sit in the apartment for about two hours and drink, while we, hiding in the holes were fearful about our life's. I always started coughing trying to quiet down the people in the basement. Hiding in the kitchen oven, I listened to Zlata and Laicia talking, and was aware what was happening in the

street. On many occasions, one group of bandits in our apartment was joined by another group. In such cases, we had to have an extra bottle of hard liquor to quench their fire. [The local Christians] made it into a habit to stop by after work in our apartment for a drinking spree. [For this reason] we always had to have a few bottles of liquor and food to go with it for the bandits. I remember how the people in the basement were asking me to inform them about what was happening in the street. On more than one occasion I used to go down to the basement, and quiet down the people in the staircase hideout. I was the only who could cheer them up. I was the only one who understood what they were going through. I was in the same situation [hiding in the oven] as they were. The people in the basement blessed me. Mechil's mother always used to tell me: "Nothing will ever happen to you. You'll be saved from everything bad. No bad wind will ever blow in your direction". This kosher woman always carried with her the 'victim' Minkhah Sidur, and never separated herself from it until the last minute of her life. I will write about it specially at a later time. The other people in the basement blessed me in their own way. Mrs. Rab barely knew a word of Yiddish. She was one of the old, Liczokower kerosene saleswoman. Her daughter was a good Christian. from her mouth one could not hear another word than Jesus-Maria. She did not know Yiddish at all. Mrs. Gold was a divorcee who liked to davenen [pray] and bless, read Krishmah [interpretation of the Torah]. The people in the basement always blessed me. It's possible that thanks to all these blessings I had survived till this very day. In any event, when all these blessings will be heard, I will, with God's help, live to the day when I will see my brother. [62] The German Action lasted four weeks. I think it ended before Passover. I had a hard time trying to

manage this period. I had a specially difficult time with mechil's mother. She was always a fragile woman. I believe she suffered from asthma. In any case, the poor woman was always coughing. The other women in the hideout rebelled against her, saying: "She will be the end of us. Because of this Jewish woman, we'll all go [to our death]". I always told the people in the basement to be as free as the circumstances permitted in the [forsaken]c hole. Pepe used to tell the people that we would survive in this old place. But go talk to Szarlotka. She did not understand a word you said. As I mentioned earlier, the [German] action lasted almost four weeks. We did not sleep during the day nor at night. Every night, I stood by the window and watched pocket flashlights moving through the street. The people who were supposed to hide, sat ready to hide, dressed. I did not let them into the basement, because the apartment above had more air. The people sat in the kitchen on the floor. During this time I did not sleep or eat. At the time, it was possible to get a work certificate, however, it cost from 100 to 200 dollars per job. Once again, I decided against going to work possibly because the people around me did not want me to work. They said that our old believe in God would keep me safe. Furthermore, I was tied to the home and [Zlata's] children. I had a feeling that I would not survive without the children and family.

In the meantime, the events ran their course. One Monday, Miss Szarlotka with her gold hair sister went out in the direction of Leczawka Street. On that day a rumor spread that no Action would take place. Yet, the two women were caught. They never returned. [63] Also Golda, one day in the morning, joined the men on their way to work. Golzawas' brother-in-law, my former companion in hiding in the basement during the Winter months, named Sztengel, saved the

sister-in-law, the widow, by screaming that she was his wife, and she forgot her papers at home. But it did not help. She was taken away. These two women were the first victims in our home.

Chanale Eizen was very sick, and so her old mother wanted to visit her. Right before Passover, when Chanale's husband was at work, her mother decided to visit and help her daughter. We begged her not to go. We told her: "Once the Christian children will see you, they will send in the Chevra [=the guys] to search the home. This is especially dangerous because during the day only old, persons who were not working were at home". Once, Mechil came home and informed us about an Action near the railroad tracks. A few trucks came with a group of men. It so happened that on this day the mother went to see her daughter. Her heart was telling her to go to visit her daughter. Hurriedly, Mechil went to Chanale. She happened to live on the same street as us. The old Mrs. Eisen was hidden in Chanale's closet. It so happened that the news about the Action reached Chanale's home first. Quickly, Mechil brought the mother home. We barely managed to hide ourselves in the holes, when the gang arrived. First, they stopped at Chanale's place, then they jumped over the fence because they did not know how to open the gate to our house, and came in. They looked into the closet and through the apartment of another apartment, and found no one. Then they came to us, and found no one. It was not the first time that they came up empty handed. [64] Most of the time they searched in the rooms, in and under the beds, and in the attic. The entrance to the basement we disguised with an old blanket.

This is how we suffered from day to day, and night after night. On the morning of the first day of Passover, we baked in the oven, in the kitchen, a few matzot. We grounded the grain in a coffee

grinder. I mixed the flour with water, Zlata and Laicia kneaded the dough, and Szeva baked it. At the time Sheva had a good disposition.

The time came to plant potatoes. Yosel was going to the field with a wagon and horses, and everyday, he sent home about 40 to 50 kg. of potatoes. At the time, a potato was, like they say, a hand in the fire. Sheva and Pepe used to bring food in a basket to Yosel working in the field. Going back home, everytime, they managed to bring a few kg of potatoes. The Christians used to take full cubic feet of potatoes from the field and sell it at the side of the road. For this reason, they did not pay attention to the few kg. taken daily by the Jews. During this period, Sheva was in the best of moods because of the potatoes she was taking from the field, and knowing that 1 kg. of potatoes was, if I remember correctly, 10 or more zloty [Polish currency]. I made a point about this fact because other times Sheva gave her husband, two children, and all of us a miserable time.

Wintertime, before the Christian holidays, the bandits attacked us for the first time. If I am not mistaken, our landlady had a hand [=had a hand] in the attack on us. Here is what took place: Around seven or eight o'clock in the evening, Yosel Haberkorn went outside. As he came out, he heard someone trying to rip open the gate to our courtyard. Hurriedly, he returned inside to inform us about it. At that time, I and Zlata were standing in the chicken plucking shack. That particular day, Zlata was washing clothes. When Yosel came in, we were in the process of taking a large pot of wash off the kitchen oven into the chicken plucking hut, and transferring it into a tub so it could be soaked over night. At the time, Zlata was still washing clothes as she did before the war: the clothes were first boiled, then starched, and later on they were rinsed. It happened

that some items were starched once again. [65] Yosel, Szlomo, and I walked outside. However, we could not return to the apartment. The bandits threw themselves at us. I was the last one to come out. I did not manage to go down the few steps. But here, Yosel and Szlomo were beaten with a variety of pipes. Yosel managed to escape to the neighbor's apartment, but Szlomo did not make it. In the meantime, the wooden tub and the large pot left little room to move around in the feather plucking shack. In the first beating, the bandits broke Szlomo's hand with an iron bar. At this point a war began between us and them. The bandits went into the feather plucking shack, while we came out of the apartment with pots full of hot oil. The oil was heated on the kitchen stove with wooden logs stored in the kitchen. When the bandits realized that they couldn't rob us, so instead, they broke all the windows in our apartments. The children woke up. We began to throw [at the bandits] bottles and pieces of coals through the broken windows. The screaming was unbearable. I also reminded myself about Zlata's small children standing in their nightshirts, and shaking from fear. In apartment number 15 we had Christian neighbors, but they did not come out. There were only two Ukrainian families who were bothered by the fact that the Christians wanted to murder a Jewish family. The attackers would probably not leave us alone, had it not been for two Jewish neighbors who came out to help us. It was Naihaus and Arnold [previously mentioned] who was a boxer and a soccer player - in one word a sportsman. He threw himself at one of the guys. There were four attackers. One of the attackers was about to stab Arnold with an extremely long knife, when Arnold tripped him, causing his fall to the ground. The bandit ran away. When the neighbors came to our apartment, we began to see what really happened. The entire wash, the staircase and the path

leading to the street was full of blood. The bandits got a good lesson. We were almost sure that one of the bottles hit one of the bandits because the broken bottle in the courtyard was full of blood. The apartment and courtyard was full with all kinds of plates, pots, pieces of wood for fire and coals. You should know that some of the items we threw at the bandits, were thrown by the bandits right back.

[66] The next day, we took Szlomo to a Jewish doctor. There were still Jewish doctors to be found. Shlomo's hand was put in a cast. He could not work for a few weeks. The day Szlomo, Laicia, and Zlata went to the doctor, we boarded up all the windows in the apartment. We had two windows in the main room and one in the kitchen. In the main room, we boarded one window completely and the other only half with wooden planks. We left a half a window not boarded so we could get some light into the room. The kitchen window we boarded with wooden planks, and every few days we put in another iron bar creating, eventually, an iron bar grating for the entire window. Lonik brought home iron rods which we put into the window and around the light so as to protect it. In the same manner we protected the windows in the attic and the chicken plucking shack with iron rods. We made it in a way that they could not be pushed in or out. We had a strong feeling that the guys would come back to take their revenge. We also reinforced the door from the basement, attic, windows in the Teper apartment, and the three windows in the apartment of our neighbor across the hall. The door to the building and our apartment were secured with iron bars. Our home was like a fortress. After a few days, another attack came. However, at night-fall, we used to bring water into the house, and when the men came from work around 4 or 5 in the evening, in the Wintertime, we closed

all the doors, and did not leave the house. Occasionally people used to come to us in the evening, but we did not open the door. However, in cases when we had to open the door, all men in the house came to the door with axes in hand. This was not a joke. There were Jewish families who were robbed of everything they owned because they did not close their door. The oldest daughter of uncle Jehuda lived near us, on the adjacent street. Once when she was not home, they [the Christians] robbed her of everything she had. One night, two bandits, who visited the home on many occasions, came to the house. [67] The woman had two daughters, beautiful girls. My beloved sister maybe you remember the girls. It seemed, from a very young age, that the girls would one day become movie actresses. They danced beautifully. I did not know them, but they used to come to us when we lived on Bilinkiewicza Street. Zlata always gave the girls to eat, or, from time to time, for Shabbat, sent their mother a piece of meat, some flour, and other food stuff. On that specific night, the bandits raped both girls, while tying up their mother and father. All their linens they took away on another occasion. The family slept in the clothes they walked around during the day. The next day, following this terrible ordeal, they ran to the home of uncle Juda because the Christians only wanted to move into a home with all the comforts. I could write a lot more about such incidents. Many such incidents ended with the murder of entire Jewish families. The [Christian] guys came to visit us if not every night, then every second night. Who cared about a Jew. We even thought about making a stand, and put an end to all this. However, it did not make any sense because the Ukrainian neighbor from apartment 15 was their partner, and always informed them about our moves. He was always home and observed everything we did. I used to

stay awake at night, and sleep during the day. It's when one slept that one was afraid of an Action. It so happened that the bandits did not leave us alone until we moved out of there. We knew that the landlady was behind the whole thing because everytime the bandits attacked us at night, the landlady came to us early in the morning. We could not say a word. The only thing we said was that we would move out only when the house would burn down. [68] Three or four days later, we found under the wooden steps a bundle of straw soaked with kerosene. For some reason, the bandits did not put a match to the straw even though we did not hear them when they came into the courtyard. The bandits did not throw anything into the well located in the courtyard because the neighbor from apartment 15 [the Ukrainian] drank water from the same well. The landlady wanted us to move so she could rent the apartment again. When it became warmer outside, we set up an outside watch. At a later point, when the Action was going on, the bandits were afraid to walk around the town at night because of the police patrols during the night. One day, the bandits crawled through the basement, and with ladders reached the attic. However, nothing happened. I was told by the landlady that we would not be thrown out."As far as we were concerned", we told the landlady, "If we were to be attacked, the first thing we would do was to burn down the entire house". Because of what we had said, the landlady was afraid a bit.

Our landlady's name was Maria Ignatowicz. Her husband was a train conductor, working on the street car. The Russians sent him to Siberia. The lady had one son and a daughter. We will write about them later.

As we baked the matzot, we didn't believe at the time that this was the end. And if I am not mistaken, on that day as well as on

Passover 1942

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Peach, we hid ourselves. I don't remember exactly what happened. On that day we cleaned the house a little bit. We even cleaned the house in the worst Winter days, while the snow was resting on the walls. At night, Mechil read the Passover seder. Mechil's mother ate with us. Abish [Zlata's son] asked the four questions. Our entire family shared the few Matsot we had with the Tepers. The Teper's brought some wine for the seder kiddush. It happened that we poured out more tears than we drank wine. Everyone cleansed his heart with a flow of tears, and we hoped Maybe - Maybe.

As it happened, by the time Yom Tov came around, all of Zlata's oil was gone. Yet, the food we made was very good. I don't remember whether she had four or five eggs. [69] This was the first pesach under the German [occupation]. What was important that we were all still alive.

I remember the time when small Elisz cried when his child sport carriage was sold. At the time, a good price was taken for it - 500 zloty. A Christian bought the carriage for his child on March 19. "Jozefa, mama, ja niechce sprzedac wozek. Ja chcem sam jechac na nim" [from Polish: "Jozefa, mother, I don't want to sell the carriage. I want to ride it myself"]. Sure, Eliasz was promised that when the world will change, uncle Meir will buy him another, a more beautiful carriage". But the boy said: "I don't want it. There will not be another world". The child felt that he will not ride in this or any other carriage. The child actually fought with us, as the Christian took the carriage away. The boys was saying: "Mamo, ja niechcem, ja niechcem [from Polish: "Mother, I don't want, I don't want]. On the other hand, the older boy was trying to persuade the younger one that it's necessary to sell the carriage so we could buy bread. Finally, when the carriage was actually taken out of our

apartment, Eliasz had tears in his eyes as I did writing these words. My beloved ones, irrespective of what I would write about the children, it would not compare to what they actually were in reality. My dear sister, imagine the heart of the sincere Zlata as she had to sell the carriage while the child was screaming: "Mamo, ja niechcem"[in Polish: "I don't want to"]. The Christian grabbed the carriage, threw the 500 zloty on the table, and ran away. He could not bear to see the scene. He also had tears in his eyes. Do you think that the child rode in the carriage? No. The carriage was sitting on top of the closet, shining new as it came originally from the store. I tell you, I bartered and sold many items, but selling this carriage clamped my heart. The small boy was bright and so intelligent that he read newspapers. He would grow up to be a prodigy. You should know that a private teacher was coming home to Abish who wanted to study everyday. The rabbi came a few times to show small Eliasz the Aleph Bet. In a matter of a few weeks the boy knew how to daven [pray]. Eventually the boy caught up with the older brother. The teacher got a kick out of the child. [70] When the carriage was being taken away, the boy told me, for the first time, something which I would not forget for a long time to come, [in Polish]: "Wiedz sobie, za babcie, za Kamionki. Co wujek chce odemnie?" [=]: "You should know. For grandma, for Kamionki. Uncle, what do you want from me?" My head was exploding. I did not recognize my writing. I had to take a break. It was not like we had to sell the carriage because we did not have a piece of bread. However, I never thought that the buyer of the carriage would pay the price I was asking. I asked 500 zloty knowing full well that such a carriage was sold by Mr. Mesing daughter's nanny Czaf, Pepe's cousin, about whom I would write later, for 300 zloty. Yet, the

carriage was sold. The Christian wanted very much the carriage. He liked the color, and the carriage was in perfect condition. The Christian told me that I am exploiting the situation, and he is overpaying for the carriage by 150 zloty. I said I wanted 500 and took 500.

One day, as Zlata was walking from Ester with Eliesz, she passed the Christian with his wife and the carriage. Eliesz ran over to the carriage and exclaimed in Polish: "Please give me back the carriage". The Christian carried bread from the store. She gave Eliasz a full loaf of bread. At the time, a kilo of bread in the store was about 20 or even more zloty.

The carriage had an attachable storage bag where food such a bottle of milk could be stored. After we sold the carriage, Zlata found the attachable bag. The bag was not attached to the carriage at the time of the sale. Zlata took the bag to the Christian woman. The woman rewarded Zlata with another loaf of bread.

My beloved, you wonder why I spent so much time writing about the carriage. Yet, when you take under consideration our situation at the time, you will understand that in the words of the child, the entire Jewish tragedy was reflected. My dear, the Jewish tragedy was told through the childs' words: our total bitter situation, our panicking, our experiences which only began. The only person who can understand all this, is a person who saw and experienced it.

[71] If after describing all these events, you could ask me all kinds of questions, and I could answer them, then I could be satisfied after living through all this. Yes, I could be happy if I could still see you my only, dear, close brother.

As the Spring came, bringing with it bright sunny days, at the same time, the Jewish hearts became darker. The Jewish properties

and holdings were divided. Entire Jewish families were totally uprooted. Inflation was steadily growing. And with the time, the Christians became afraid to enter Jewish homes. The most disturbing fact was that some Christians did not work, but all day long they walked the streets looking for Christians who may possibly enter a Jewish home to sell or barter something. When they caught such a Christian going into a Jewish home: first, they took away his merchandise, and two, they blackmailed the Jew, demanding money for their silence. In case when the Jew was not cooperating, the Christian brought in the police. There were many Christians who had Ukrainian policemen working with them as partners, and in other cases called upon the SS men. In many cases, the Christian made a deal with the Jew, took the money, and then the police rushed in and confiscated the merchandise. In such cases, the Christian [watchdog] was accused together with the Jew because he took bribe money from the Jew. At times, when the Jew refused to be robbed, the Christian had many friends and acquaintances on Felczinska or Loncki street to "take care" of the Jew. Many stories can be written about the Felczinska or Lonckiego streets guys and their bloody role in the Jewish lives. The Jews were definitely not fed with bread. However, anybody who fell victim to the Christian bandits could settle everything on the spot. It was cheaper this way than to oppose the gang.

A loaf of bread cost about 30 to 40 zloty. We had some wheat, and everyday I grounded two kilograms of wheat in a coffee grinder. A kilogram of wheat was between 20 and 25 zloty. Our supplies went down during the Winter month, and we began to ration our food supplies. Father sent us four hundred dollars. A dollar was worth between 25 and 40 zloty, meaning it could purchase about two kg. of

wheat. [72] The food situation worsened when the Christians inspected wagons on the roads, and confiscate the merchandise. And when some merchandise was allowed to pass through, a high price had to be paid for the privilege. As a result, about ten thousands Jews walked around swollen from hunger and freezing from cold. Jews were dying from hunger in the streets. At the bread stores where bread was distributed with bread cards, dozens of people begged the people leaving the store to spare a piece of bread. They used to say: "let my heart feel the joy". The bread was distributed by weight, by pieces to dozens of recipients.

Zlata had her regular guests through the Winter, and all the time. There were times when there was not too much to eat. However, Zlata always made a Summer soup from young beats together with the leaves, and some deer meat. She used to care of: her son's rabbi, everyday, 1. Eliakim and his son Baruch, both were swollen from hunger - Eliakim was a shames in a shtibel next street to ours, Supartka, once a week or on Shabbat, 3. Fach, a cantor, with his two sons. He was a good man. Our permanent guest. Lately, he got swollen, and we fed him by hand, 4. uncle Jehuda's oldest daughter, 5. Raden's two sons. Raden had a store with sweets. He was handicapped. I could go on and on. The crazy Mincze's daughters were constantly my dear sisters' guests. My sister never let anybody walk away empty handed. Hunger looked everytime into another Jewish apartment. Some Jews were only yesterday giver, and the next day takers of food. It's enough to mention Abraham Wasersztein Sapir, Szlomo Boricie, a partner during the good times, Ester - Mechil's sister, Hersz Leib with six small children. I only mentioned a few acquaintances and family members. Everytime, Laicia Wasersztein came to us, we used to make her feel better with a little bit of soup

which she enjoyed very much. Her sister, Mechil's mother fed Mechil and Yosel! Ester would to anything possible to find a "spoonful of cooked food" [a Yiddish expression] for her two small children. At the time, her son Abele was already an adolescent. She used to deliver kerosene to people just to give her children a piece of bread [73] or a spoonful of cooked food. I will write separately about my family.

From the grounded wheat flour, I baked small, round, flat cookies. I divided the cookies among the children. Oh dear God forgive me for my behavior toward the small children whom I refused to give a cookie on more than one occasion. You can imagine how big the cookies were considering the fact that from two kg. of wheat flour we made between 104 and 112 cookies. The golden souls [referring to the nephews] used to ask me: "Wujcio, niech wujcio da nam jeszcze jeden placek" [= "Uncle, give us one more cookie"]. Can you imagine, for the two children for whom I would give anything in the world, I rationed a cookie weighing 3 decagrams. Abale used to remind me about the time when grandma from Kaminke ran after him with a buttered rogale, and he did not want it. He did not like it when his mother was feeding him with banana, oranges and chocolate. When the younger boy became angry, on two occasions, he sent me to Kaminke to get him a cookie, as in the case when I sold the carriage. I couldn't, can't, and will never forgive myself for it. The boy was like an <u>adult</u>. When he was told something once, he never forgot it. He remembered all the street names where members of our family were residing. Street names such as: Kardinal Tromba, Szochczinskiego, Wniebowstanie which the parents could not even pronounce. Whenever he got a hold of a Polish newspaper, he immediately pointed to A,B, etc. Later on he read entire sentences

in Polish. Whatever I would write about the children would not negate the truth. Many times my dear sister pointed to the two children sitting at the table and playing domino. The older boy was serious, full with devotion to his parents. Oh, on how many occasions he gave his piece of bread to Abish, Ester's son, or to Eti Gitale, the smallest child. She also passed away of hunger. They were all dying of hunger. Later on, when the girl could have lived, she was already dead. I will write about her later on. Zlata's younger boy was very grown up for his age. He looked at everybody with his two smart eyes. Szlomo Baric was crazy after the boy. Both boys, the older and younger, always said good morning. When the father came home, they always ran to meet him before he entered the home. Everytime, the father brought some wood from work, they always took it from him, and brought it into the house. Oh, how happy we were during these fleeing moments, in spite of all the problem which we were facing. From day to day, Mechil's sister, Chanale, was getting weaker. One nice Summer day, she passed away. On Thursday, she was taken out of the home and brought to the Jewish hospital. She passed away on Tuesday. Her husband's, Shaje's, stinginess killed her. Shaje refused to sell anything from the house, and did not give her anything to eat. When Shaje's brothers eventually forced him to do something, it was too late. Chanale gave Mechil and Yosel her diamond ring, which they sold for 8000 zloty. She could have been saved but not at the time when the ring was sold. At that point it was too late. When she was still strong, she was afraid to give her diamond ring to be sold because she was afraid that her husband would find out about it. I believe that Chanale was the only one from our family who was buried in the cemetery. Everyone else died according to Hitler's system. I will

write about them in a separate section. Let her only brother, Levi Eizen from Erets Israel know about it. Let their children know how the Eizen's finished their lives.

I would like to live to see the day when I could take the IV remaining members of the family and show them the places where their and our brothers and sisters, and nieces suffered immeasurably and lived through hell inflicted by the German government. They suffered until their last ounce of breath. If there is justice in this world, not a single German should remain alive. But even this would not be enough of a payment for the innocent old people and small children whom the Germans barbarically murdered. [75] Today the Germans are screaming that they are being bombed. Let them look at the mass graves of innocent Jews in every small shtetl, and they will see that nothing is happening to them. Even when completely uprooted, it will not be enough of a punishment, because of what we had lost can not be brought back.

Registration - identity card or Mr. Krajewski

[75] After food prices slowly began to decline, everyone was trying to persuade me that I should go to work, especially to Jewish jobs. It did not make any sense to stay home. To add to the problem, they once again began to register Jews. Every employed worker received an armband and a number. A rumor was circulated that we would not be able to stay here. Another rumor said that in the congested area where we were residing, a real ghetto would be established, similar to the ones in other, large cities. And any Jew without an armband would not be able to enter it. The Jews who would work and have the number, would only gain by it; on the other hand, the Jews who would not work would be killed. It was hard to determine how much truth was in these rumors, because Jews were murdered whether they were working or not. Yet, I began to think about the problem in earnest. Everyday, another of our men came home with a new number. The first one was Hersz-Leib, then Yosel Eisen, Szlomo, Yosel, Mechil, Lanik, two of my neighbors, the rabbi, and Sztengel. All men living on our street had already registered. I kept to my gun. I believed that was always time to work. Yet, we are only humans. Zlata screamed at me: "I will not survive if you don't register, receive an Id card, and a registered armband". She reminded me about the problems she had during the last Action [76] because of me. I was struggling with the notion whether to go or not to go, even though there was no place for me to work. One could not get a job, if one did not pay for it. The Germans did not know how to overcharge the Jews for a job. However, the Jewish mediators taught them. In the meantime, I did not go out in the street. Since

the first arrival of the Germans, I had not been in the street, except the time I walked from Zlata to Pepe, and from there to Kilinkiewicza Street. I made for myself a false passport. I was thinking about using the passport to run away into the world. It was a Russian passport, from a Lemberg born Pole, a man named Fencherski. Most likely the passport was taken away from him. The forger inserted my picture and necessary seals into the passport. But like during the Russian period so it happened now, I could not separate from and leave my parents. At present I also could not decide to leave Pepe, and Zlata with the children. So I remained holding on to the passport. I was forced to hide it in a good place so no one would find it on me. The passport was very useful when I showed it twice to the Jewish police. The policemen were searching for men too work. The first time, I asked one of the policeman in Polish: "What he would prefer to be a Pole, or a Jew wearing a police cap". The second time, I showed the policeman my passport and asked the policeman whether I could not trade with my Jewish friends. On both occasions, I did not have time to hide. It did not cross the policeman's mind that I could be anything else than a Pole. At the beginning, false documents were not as widely used on the Jewish street as at a later date. In the meantime a place of work became vacant. It was a true blessing for me.

In the courtyard where Pepe's uncle, Mr. Mesing was residing, lived a man named Krajewski. The man owned a carpentry workshop which produced carpentry products for the German firm Fontes. The firm was refurbishing the main train station. Both Mesings worked for Krajewski, the father and his son Mandik. In the workshop worked also the husband of Mesing's daughter, Czaf from Radziechow, Perlmuter, a fabric merchants from Belsk, and a few other Jews.

Krajewski happened to have an extra registration card which he sold to me for 13000 zloty.

[77] Today is the 26th of April. This exact moment, a Soviet pilot dropped a few bombs. People ran to hide in the basements. I had to remain in my place in the attic. What do you think is a good place to hide from airplanes. I did not have to work for Krajewski. I received the Id card, and could stay home. It was a blessing for me. The other Jews also did not have to work. Every month I gave Krajewski a few zloty so I could get a new seal, and with the seal I could stay home. I went together with Pepe to the employment office where I registered as a carpenter. I had to tell them where I learned the trade, where I took the qualifying examination, and where I practiced the profession. I answered all the questions, and received the Id card. My registration Number was 35107. Mechil's number was 425. A lot can be said about Weiber, the head of the employment office. However, it's enough to note that the young bandit used to come out often from his office with a whip in his hand, and hit people over the head. Yet, he was not the worst of the lot. The moment I received the Id card, I began to look for a job for Pepe. Because she was taking care of my household, I tried to get for her a registration card for housekeepers. The approval had to be first given by the community, only then the original card was issued.

Jew?

One day, I believe it was on a Wednesday, 22 or 24 of June, 1942, at 2 PM in the afternoon, out of the blue, an Action was taking place. Whoever did not have a registration card was caught by the Germans. At the time, Pepe was visiting her aunt Mesing on Damarstinowska Street 41. Yosel Haberkorn's sister was also visiting the Mesing family. As it happened, on that particular day, Pepe's

aunt went to barter something and took Pepe with her. The aunt used to make business with fabric coupons. By mistake, she had on her daughter's registration card, while Pepe had only her temporary white document. When the street filled with smoke, Mesing send Pepe to her home on Damarstnowska Street, to fetch her registration card, while she remained in the home of the Christian where she was making a trade. Unfortunately, rather than to send the Christian she sent Pepe. Though the Mesing woman was not someone could easily ignore, because she was a shrewd and wise woman, she did not think it over what she was about to do, and sent Pepe. When Pepe reached King Street, she was stopped and taken to the gathering place on Podzamsze Street where the Podzamsze train station was located. Under the Polish rule, on the right side of the train station entrance were located cavalry barracks. Pepe was caught at two 2 PM in the afternoon, but we did not know anything about it until Lonik came home at 5 PM in the evening. He stopped by in Mesing's place, and found out what happened. When Loniek came to Mesing, the Mesing lady was already home. You can imagine what was going on in our home. Horrors spread through the home. Sheva, Zlata, and Laicia were dumbfounded. Pepe let Mesing know where she was. Pepe had on her a piece of old newspaper on which she wrote down a few words. A young man who was about to be released after someone brought his Id card from home, took zlata's (Pepe's) message and delivered it to Mesing. Hurriedly, I grabbed a saw considering the fact that I was a carpenter, put on a pair of glasses, and ran to the assembly point. I never went anyplace withoust a pair of glasses.

The situation on the street was horrifying. Jews were pulled into the streets from all directions. Older people, children with parents, and grandchildren were beaten. All were bleeding. Sheva,

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Yosel, Mechil, Szlomo and Lonik went with me running. We heard screaming nonstop: "Oh my mother! Oh my father! Oh my sister". People were shot on the spot where they were caught, in their hiding place. Hurriedly, we reached the assembly point. Hundreds of people were crowded into the place, but no one was allowed inside the barracks. [79] People were kept in stables. During this Action, hundreds of people were caught. Every few minutes, truck full of people were leaving for the Janowo station - the last station for the murderous path. It was here that we met Mesing with his brother-in-law Czaf. We saw Jews being brought in from all directions. They were beaten, and half naked. Blood was flowing freely. Quickly, I pushed myself toward the entrance, and forced my way among the rounded up Jews. I or Pepe had luck. I showed my registration card and told an SS man: "I come from work. I work at the Ost railroad, and my housekeeper was taken away". The SS man heard me out, even though just before I approached him, I saw him beating a young man holding two children on his hands. I believe the children were twins. Both the father and the children were bleeding profusely. I went over to murderer. He heard me out, then he went inside the barn, among the gathered Jews, and called out the name of Pepe Haberkorn. When she identified herself, he took Pepe by the hand, led her out of the barn, and brought her over to me.

Here I break [the story]. The flier continuous to through his packages. Today is the 27th of April. Last night, at one point, I stopped writing. I had a terrible headache. The Poles continued to move out from the area because the Ukrainian gangs were burning Polish villages, and murder the Polaks. In Kaminke they burned down the Polish Jazienice-Berbekes, Taurkes, and Ptaszniki [probably streets]. The Poles were moving to the other side of the San river.

A few times, my landlady had plans to move out, but luckily for me she did not move from the place till this very day. Yesterday they had a community meeting about moving, but, so far, nothing happened. [80] In the meantime, our front is not moving even an inch closer. I visited Jodel Szteker from Jagonia. When Pepe was inside [the barn], she understood that it was very hard to come out of there alive. However, she had hope, and she continued to push herself toward the inner walls, because the people standing around the entrance were constantly taken away with trucks. She was one of the first to be brought in. She quickly realized that the people who were brought in and stood near the entrance were soon afterwards taken out and loaded on trucks. The situation and it's evaluation by Pepe made it possible for her to survive and stay in the barn for over five hours, and I should find her alive. The companions who went with me to look for Pepe did not know what to think. They thought maybe I was also caught in the warehouse because on many occasions, the Id document was torn up and the Jew was caught in the cage. You can imagine my companions joy when they saw me and Pepe in the street, free. Everybody was crying from joy. Many times, German officers walked around the barn, and intervened, by not allowing a Jew to leave the place. And here I, someone who had not exchanged two words with them, or seen them in my life before that day, was let go free. We ran home to Bielenkiewicza Street like maniacs. Continuously, new victims were led away. The cries from the tortured were unbearable. Every few minutes we had to hide because every few step we encountered Ukrainian police and Germans. God forbid, we did not want that Pepe should be caught a second time. Many mistakes were made by the patrolling police when checking peoples' documents. On the way home, I met two people from Kaminke. Their situation was

quite different from mine. I saw old Taube-Szifre, our former neighbor, being led away. She barely walked on her feet, as she held a small child on her hands, while a second child, about four years old, was holding on to her dress. She did not have a kerchief on her head. ~~He~~ She was sorrowfully beaten up and bleeding. The children were screaming. It was horrifying to hear all this. I saw a ~~Jew~~ being led into the place. He had a white, long beard. [81] He picked up his head and with sweet eyes stared at the murderers. It seemed to me like he was laughing at everything. He was not afraid of death. The second Kaminke man was Sliwka [= in Polish: prune]. He was my neighbor. His house was near the slaughterhouse. He was an employee in the tax office. This bandit went from our town to the Zolkwa road. He was full of joy, and his face expressed great satisfaction from the events which were happening at the time. It possible that when he left Kaminke, he did not expect to find such frolic in Lemberg [= wedding, a Yiddish expression]. It would have been different if at that time I was in power. At another such tragic occurrence, I met his brother, traveling on a truck to town. However, about that later.

We reached home with great difficulty. However, another event kept us from enjoying the momentary happiness. None of the residents in the house were ready to believe in our run towards home. They were sure that one of us would be caught. We had to convince everyone of them that Pepe was released from the cage. Tepper was another person who was retained. She always went to town, to Khol, to forward a package for her husband who was in a camp. She also visited her parents everyday. She was a hearty daughter, and yet a better friend. We knew that if she was not here in the house, something must have happened to her. We sent Lonek to her parents to

find out what had happened to her. Lonek wore a very dark overall worn usually by metal workers. Hurriedly, he ran to Tokarzewskiego Street because the curfew for the Jews began at eight in the evening. He returned home at 9 PM. He took with him a bunch of keys so dressed in a working overall and carrying tools, it would look like he was coming from work. He did not bring back any good news. The parents did not know her whereabouts. However, in the home of her parents, her mother and sister were taken away. [82] We assumed that she was caught, because if she was not, she would do everything possible to return home to her children. Imagine, the tragedies which occurred every step of the way - there a mother and sister, here a mother of two children. Lonik had given lady Teper a document similar to the kind Pepe had, based on his registration card. We kept Teper's children for the night. The children cried, asking: "Where is our mother". They spoke German because they were raised in Danzig. You can imagine our happiness when at daybreak the mother returned. She met her mother and sister. She spoke very good German. When she told about her husband, who was over a year in camp, they let her go. She was one of the few from many thousands detained who was released. She, Tepper, was one of the happy ones who told about what went on in the detention place. The detainees were beaten, killed, and shot. Men and women were undressed and ordered to dance and sing, while naked bodies of young Jewish girls were whipped with riding whips. Old wives were ordered to lie on the ground, face down, then crawl. The area was surrounded with machine guns. The reflectors were so strong that one could find a needle in the sand. Later on, when I was in a **work camp**, or as the Germans used to call it, a forced labor camp, or a trap of the SS or police, I saw on many occasions such weddings [= Yiddish expression for unhappy

event]. Both Pepe as well as Tepper told me that at that moment they were born one more time. The Tepper woman separated from her mother and sister, and returned to her two children. She had for whom to live. However, the souls were not happy for long with their lives. They were rerouted like oxen which were not ready for the slaughter, and taken back to the stable. Yet, it was obvious that they could not run away from the stables, and anytime the SS wanted, they could have taken them out of there. [82] It was worse for the Jews. While the oxen were fed by their owners until they were slaughtered, and they didn't understand that a knife awaited them, here, unfortunately, the Jews had to fend for their own food, and they knew that Belzec awaited them. *

p36 Kahane compares to slave traders in Africa

Kahane p57ff The shameful The great Action 7 aug 1942

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Kahane p36 compares to other tragedies here?

The shameful September Action

[83] In the Jewish world, Jews always had a month of problems, of suffering, of tragedies. Yet, none could compare to the month of AV [a month in the Jewish calander, falling in August ad September] of 1942, not even the times under the Spanish and Roman rule. Nothing could compare to the suffering inflicted on the Jews, in the 20th century, by all Christians in the streets and surrounding areas during the period of electricity-radio-air warfare. Only Hitler, the worst murderer in the 20th century, and his assistants could formulate such a scheme. I could not say that I knew Hitlers' devoted assistants. Everyone of these horrible bandits thought only of filling his own pocket. However, for others, they always had the familiar "Hail Hitler".

Kahane p54 also compares to Spanish

After what happened to Pepe, we began to search for a job for her. However, it was hard to find a job which could fit her. We were also afraid because many people were taken from the place of work to camps. We felt that at that particular time a terrible period began for the Jews, even though when the German first entered, the period was terrible. However, now, we had a feeling that something horrible was hanging over the Jews. We knew that the German munition minister, the greatest leader of bandits in the general government, Dr. Frank, came on a official visit. He definitely left a present for the Jews, and we did not have to wait for it. The factories began to sift through the workers. In larger factories, where a considerable number of Jews was employed, [84] the SS came, and forced every Jew to go through an inspection. Any Jew who was not to the SS liking, had his registration card taken away. On the other

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hand, a person who passed the inspection, received a red seal on his Id card from the SS and the police. In the factory where Yosel Haberkorn was working, about 400 Jews were employed. At the outset, about 50 men, under police guard, were taken to the Janow camp. The same wedding [=event] took place in the place of employment of Szlomo and Mechil. This time, it was not a question of money but victims. Because in Loniek's place of employment worked only Jews, no Jews were taken away. Neither was anyone taken from Mechil's place of work. In Mechil's workplace, in the slaughterhouse and on the railroad, about 100 Jews were employed. None of them were touched, no damage was done. They paid their way in money. They carried out pieces of meat, so it was not a problem for them to pay bribe money in the amount of tens of thousands of zloty. At the time, Mechil gave 100 zloty. There were some who gave a few thousands. They had a German named Szmalc who was a meat merchant. He specially kept only Jewish workers. He had his office in the slaughterhouse where he also kept the meat in refrigeration chambers. Because he gave meat on credit to many customers, he had the opportunity to meet with and make many right connections with the right chevra [guys]. The German made a bet with the Jews that for 60,000 zloty, he would arrange it that none of his Jews nor the ones working in the slaughterhouse would be taken away. These Jews did well, but the people working for Szmalc fared much better financially than the ones working for the city slaughterhouse. All Id's received seals. Then the cards of the wives were taken. Each card stated that the owner of the card [husband] has a red seal from the SS, and the woman takes care of his household. They called this kind of seal, a secondary seal, a seal which excluded the owner of the seal from the Action. The Jews received seals for the other

world. [85] Pepe was still without a job. We were afraid to send her to work because everyday there were cases where Jews were sent directly to the transport [going to camp]. As of that time, the Action did not start in Lemberg, although from all cities in Poland, Jews were being taken to Belzec. Transports were coming from Kolomei, Kati, Kasiw, Krakow, Berrza, Podhaice, Przemislany, and Przemysil. I could go on listing many more towns and shtetls from Galicja [region in the former Austrian-Hungarian empire]. In addition to Belzec, there was yet another execution place in Poland, in a place known as Sowibor, in the region of Chelm. Jews from Galicja were sent to Belzec. The people going to the transports were first brought to and gathered at an execution ~~execution~~ point. Can you imagine, new, healthy people thrown together with people who were already traveling for eight days - people who were half-dead, crazy, half choking from cramped quarters, swollen from hunger, small children whose parents were already dead or still at home in the Action or here in the train car. The people who thought that young girls and boys, or very young people were being sent to work, were persuaded that everything belongs to God. The Christians were smiling and saying: "Zydki, idiosz na mydlo [= Jews, you are going for soap]. The German don't have soap". My dearest, when you'll read these words don't think that I did not see these events with my own two eyes. I did see it. Later when I was in camp, I saw much worse things; yes, much worse things. At first the people had clothes on their back, but later on they were all led stark naked. I saw a few train cars full with small children. Sadly, the small Jewish souls rode in train cars used to carry pigs. Oh God, if one German is still alive today, there is no justice in this world. How many valuable hours did the small souls demand from their parents? How

much effort, blood and sweat did take mother to raise the children. It would have been better if the mothers would not have lived to see all this. GOD PUNISH GERMANY. [86] As I was writing these words, planes flew over my head. Machine gun fire was heard. I did not know whether it was a air battle between Russian fighter planes and German bombers, or the opposite. I did not see the sky. I had a small stream of light falling on the place where I was writing; then I moved the light higher or lower, left or right to see better. But I am laughing from this. How happy would it make the Jews had they lived to see this. All men had their registration cards signed except for me. One day, someone came to inform me that I should take, as soon as possible, my registration card to Damarstinowski Street, because my boss was sending the cards to be stamped. The boss collected all the cards and sent them to the German firm. We did not have to go to be seen. The picture in the registration was enough for them to see. Because most of the workers lived in the area of the workplace, they sent their cards very early in the morning. However, in my case, by the time I was informed by the workshop it took some time because the work place was quite a distance from Bilinkiewicza Street where we resided. Pepe came to tell me about it. I was home at the time. I dressed hurriedly, an ran to Damarstinowski Street. This was not the time for the Jews to be in the streets. Jews were in the street when they walked to or from work, never at any other time, except the ones who worked for Altes Eizen Flesher. These Jews wore tin numbers on the lapel of the coat or jacket. Arriving at the workshop, I found out that Mr. Krajewski had already taken the registration cards to the main railroad station where the German firm Fantes was located. When Krajewski saw me, he began to curse me out. He was an ordinary, ugly

drunk, a low life. He had a mean expression on his face. I will write about him later. His name would still have to be mentioned. Confronted with the mans' curses and abuse, I stood in front of him flabbergast. [87] I did not know the gangster well. My blood was boiling inside me. I took personally my registration card to the German firm at the main train station. The firm had its office in a barrack. Krajewski was supposed to take my registration card with a trolley to the firm, a minor thing, but he refused to do it. I went alone. I always had the glasses with me. I did not want the people to know about me. And even though Lemberg was a big city, I used to meet acquaintances but they did not recognize me. I grew a mustaches which I have till this very day. I left my document in the office. I was told to return to work, and they would return my document to the workshop. I returned from the main train station without the document. On Kazimierzawski Street, I was stopped. They asked me what I was doing in the street during working hours. I told the Szofowicz that I took my registration card to the office. These were already Szoife men from the nearby death brigade. He was laughing, as I told him that I was working for the railroad, in a German firm. I did not want to mention Krajewski's name. I thought that if I would say: "I work for Fontas, it would make a better impression on the man. It seemed to me that the man had more than one family on his conscious. He replied: "I am sure that the firm has Christians who could be sent to take care of such things [as stamping a registration card]. You don't need to send out a Jew during working hours. In second place, if I am working for the German firm, why am I going in the direction of the town?". I realized that nothing I would say would help me. I only wandered why he was wasting time talking to me. Usually, these men wasted little time on such

encounters. Shortly afterwards, his two friends came along, bringing along a few Jews. The man waited for them, so while he was waiting for the comrades, he talked to me. Later, he kicked me with his foot, and, together with the other Jews, brought us to the police station. When I entered the station, about 150 Jews were already inside. I tried to persuade them to call the firm and verify if I work for them. In response to my statement, I received two powerful slaps. I already knew their tactics. It became clear to me that words would not help the situation. I decided against talking. People in the place were beaten without mercy. I knew what had to be done. The thing to do was to sit in the corner near the window. Other people screamed and begged. We were ordered to sit on the ground, with the feet folded under us. I found a spot in the corner of the place and sat down. All what was taking place there I already saw in Remenow. I did not let out a peep out of my mouth, and fortunately, I did not receive a beating. I was happy that I told Zlata that I may sleep over in Mesing's or Klara's house, because on Gazowa Street only Klara, her child Manie, and Klara's husband lived. The rest of the family fell victim. I told them that I may sleep over so they would not worry about me a whole day, and I could sleep peacefully at night. However, I was afraid to sleep. I was afraid that someone from the family may stop by at the Mesing's and asked about me. Fortunately, on that special day, no one came to the Mesing's. The people in the room were beaten in many different ways. The beatings went on nonstop. Later on, we were ordered to leave the room, and lie, face down, in the mud. They counted us. There were eight rows, nine person in a row. Most of the people were middle aged. I believe that the first group of people, about 50, were from some kind of an institution, and the rest, like I, were caught in

the street. Sztengel was among the group, but at the time, we did not see each other. Only later on, I found out about Sztengel. They lined us up, five in a row, and took us to the fervent criminal on Kazimiezawski street.

The time was three o'clock in the afternoon. That morning, I had nothing for breakfast. We were lined up in a single row. Again, I tried to be on the left end of the line. Ten Ukrainians and four szofa men with machine guns were present. [89] It does not make sense to describe the beatings in light of what was about to happen. Soon came in a tall, strong bandit and sadist. He was a German. He wore an oil cloth coat, gloves on his hands, and a black hat on the head. He did not play around too much. Shortly afterwards came in another man carrying a blacksmith hammer, the kind which weighs 10 kg. Later on, I worked with such a hammer on a construction site. The murderer walked over to the first man on the right side of the line, and told him: "Repeat after me the following words: I must die because I am a Jew". Then he hit the man over the head with the heavy hammer, smashing the skull into bits. The brains scattered as the man fell to the ground. And so he went to the second and third man. Each time, the Jew had to say the words before he was hit with the hammer. When he murdered eighteen or twenty men, a few men fainted, and fell to the ground. As a matter of fact, I believe that when the German murdered the first Jew, the third or fourth man in the row fell to the ground unconscious. When he had murdered about a quarter of the people, a few fell to the ground, causing a commotion. I jumped at the opportunity and fell among the murdered. I pushed myself under five or six bodies whose warm blood was still spurting. All the dead bodies had no heads. I made sure that my head was hidden under the dead bodies. I felt awful. I was soaked in

blood which was sticking to my body. On top of all this, I heard the murderer scream: "You dog, you must get it, you vile Jew-Bolshevik, and other similar phrases. The hammer continued to strike. Then once again it became quiet before a few dozens of shots from automatic weapons. People ran over me. One man was killed and fell right on top of me. I heard his last words - "My wife, my small children, God", followed by a heavy thump on my body. My back became wet and warm with blood. It was the blood from the murdered person spilling over me. [90] I felt even fainter then before. At one point I definitely fainted, something I had not done in Remeniw. When I woke up, I could not orient myself where I was. However, I was not wounded nor a prisoner, neither did I get a beating. I felt terribly cold. I tried to get up, but a few bodies were on top of me. For a moment, a terrible tremor went through my body. Then in a second, I was standing up. I was covered from head to toe with blood. The blood on my face was dried up, while my entire back was wet. Outside was pitch dark. I could not make out how long I was lying here, but to my calculations, it had to be a few hours. I was surrounded with a mound of murdered corpses. I became frightened when I noticed in the dark, near the tall fence leading to the Karna Street, a few silhouettes. I was about to drop to the ground. But as I was watching them, I noticed that they were making hand motions as if calling me to come to them. At first, I did not understand their motions. But when I saw that they were motioning to me to come, I slowly moved out of the mound of bodies, and quickly ran over to them. Near the fence stood five men: a father with his son, I heard how one man called the other father. I was the sixth men in the group. When I looked at them, I realized how I must look like. We did not talk because we were terrible afraid that someone may hear

us. We all had one thing on our mind and that was to get out of here as soon as possible. There was no time to ask who or what are you? We had only one thing on our mind and that was to run away, and again to run away. The fence was very tall. [91] Hurriedly we gathered a few boxes and put together a structure. Quietly, like mice, we ran around looking for the boxes. Two of the men had strong pant belts. We tied them together and attached it to the wires at the top of the fence. The first to go over the fence was the father. The son suggested that his father should be first and he last. I was the fifth in line. The second man to go over the fence had a gun shot wound in his leg. Then came my turn to jump over the fence. On the other side of fence, I found only the father who waiting for his son. The other men disappeared into the darkness of the night. It took some time for one of the man to go over the fence. No one else stood up from the mound of bodies. I was concerned about the wounded young man but he was a sportsman. he jumped off the fence like a cat. The three of us went over to the corner of Szpitalna street where we went our own ways. During this time, we did not exchange a word between us. Later on, I was sorry that i did not asked them for their names. But at the time who had such a thing on his mind. We were unfortunate Jews, and the great disaster made us equal. I was trying to figure out where to go. It was quite a distance to Bilienkiwicza street. I had to pass the entire Zin street, then Zolkwia street, come through Baczewski street, and only then go through all the little streets near the highway. I was convinced that at one point a patrol would catch me. On Demarstinowski street lived the Mesing family. However, the main gate to the home was locked, and when one rang the bell, the landlady used to come to open the door. She was an Ukrainian. During the first period Mesing

was hiding from her. She was not a good person. I thought it over, and realized that Straizowa, the landlady, may get scared in the middle of the night and cause a commotion and an alarm. This would mean I would be caught again. Christian from the Gazownia street would come out of their homes and execute the punishment on me on the spot. I balanced this against my lust for life which at the time was considerable. [92] I sneaked across the street where the trolley turns off from Sloneczna to Szpitalna street, and ran into the alley full of fish stores. Akerman, who had a son a furrier, had a fish store here. From there I went to the shop stalls. Fortunately for me, I did not meet a living soul. Daybreak was about to begin. I believe it was about three o'clock at night. Approaching the shop stands where in the past the Jews used to sell meat, I pushed myself between the stands and waited. I did not know for what I was waiting. However, I knew one thing, if anyone were to see me He would run away from fear. I sat there until four o'clock. I know it was four because the town's clock beat four times. I felt cold. It was a Thursday. At one point, a store front window shade rolled up, and a fearful, elder and gray haired Jew looked outside. I waited until the man slowly pulled up the shade with the roll stick so as not to make any noise. It occurred to me that as long as he could pull down the shade with his hand, he would do so out of fear if he was to see me. So when I saw him putting away the pole, and walking over to a fish stall, I used the opportunity, ran over to the shop's door to prevent him from running into the store and closing the door. I could see on the Jew that he was half dead out of fear. However, when I told him: "Don't be afraid. I am a Jew who survived a mass murder". I won't go on too long. He let me into the house. Everybody in the house was still asleep, except for the man who got

up very early in the morning to say a Jewish word [possibly pray]. I washed up a bit. Then the man loaned me a jacket and a pair of pants. I wanted to leave him my jacket and pants until I would bring him back his clothes, but he refused to take my stained with blood clothes. He gave me paper to pack up my clothes. It was already five thirty in the morning. At six o'clock in the morning, I went to Klara. [93] The gate to the house was already opened. Here, I washed myself with hot water. During the period of the Russian occupation, the people installed a gas outlet. After washing myself, I wash my clothes. Manie gave me his father's clothes: a shirt, underpants and pants. My hat remained with the murdered people. I asked Manie if, on the way to work, he could return the borrowed clothed to the Jewish man. I also asked the people in the house not to say anything to anybody about what happened to me. I wanted it should seem like I slept in their house. I was in their house for the first time. Krajerson's sister and her son lived over there. When workers began to go to work, I took an armband and ran home, to Bilinikiewicza street. Zlata was wandering how come I came home in different clothes. I told her that I had to take my registration card to the German firm, so I decided to change my clothes in Klara's home. My registration was stamped, meaning I was given an SS seal. A few days later, Sztengel and Rab moved out of their apartments, and the landlady took over the apartments. They moved close to the shul, an area which was designated as the future ghetto. The Jewish apartment organization assigned the new apartment to the landlady. The Christian lady in addition to handing the Jews an official notice, made them pay a few hundred zloty. According to the landlady, the apartment was damaged so badly that she could not move into it in the existing state. She painted the apartment, and put in windows,

all this for Jewish money. She put into the apartment Zlata's tables and chairs, a desk from Levin. Arranged the apartment, and only then moved in, leaving behind Zlata's apartment. She brought from Zlata's apartment: all the windows together with the frames, the door and widow gates, and everything else which had any value. To top it all of, we had face the landlady with a smiling faces so she would not have an angry heart at us.

[94] A few days after the landlady moved into the apartment, the frightening Action began. It was a horrible Action because during this period the people still thought that it was not right, not possible that all people would be killed. For a few days, I went to work everyday. I ran to work, and walked home together with everybody else. Everyday, i wore glasses, and everyday I brought wooden shavings. The package I carried served two purposes: or we had with what to make a fire, or I used to hide myself from Christian acquaintances. Everytime, I used to sneak into the middle of the package of shavings a few thicker pieces of wood. As a result we did not have to worry about firewood. Firewood was a big issue at the time. So everyday i went to work. Mr. Krajewski, the Christian, had a good disposition only when he received a bribe from the Jews, a bribe which consisted of a liter of liquor, or two hundred cigarettes. For a few days after Krajewski received the bribe, he was quiet. Meaning, he did not say anything to the workers who gave him a bribe. The person who used to bribe the Christian was the young Mesing. Perlmuter, and Kohen, an innkeeper son-in-law from Damarstinowski street were always playing cards in Mesing's homes, and did not work. They did not mind a search. They were staying in the same courtyard where the workplace was located, and through the window, they could see any stranger coming in. In addition to

Krajewski's carpentry workshop, only a few Jewish families lived on the premises. It so happened that everything was located on the ground floor. The front of the building was destroyed by a bomb during the Polish-German war. The main gate to the courtyard had also a small door. The large gate was only opened for deliveries made to Krajewski's carpentry workshop from the train station. This situation permitted the group in Mesing's place to go on playing without worrying about intruders. Mesing's place was visited by: people who exchanges currency, gold and silver dealers, and all kinds good for nothing [=laydig geyers] characters. The Mesing's were the only one in the group who were wealthy. [95] They owned hard and soft currency [referring to gold]. The older Mesing was not happy about his job in Krajewski's workshop. For a few thousand zloty, he found another job in the air force, at the airfield in Skalow. He was right about his decision. It was not a good idea for a men and women to have work registration card from firms which were located in the same building as the residence.

On a nice Summer day, the fire began. As usual, I was on my way to work. Walking out into the street, I saw hundreds of patrols: SS, regular police, Ukrainian police, as well as men from the extermination brigade. I was stopped every few feet. Patrol were placed in every small alley, on both side and in the middle of the street. No man was allowed to pass through without a check of identification card. Every person carried his registration card in his hand, and did not put it into his pocket. The patrols looked only at the seals in the registration cards. Who had the seal was allowed to pass through. At the time, already hundreds of caught person were standing in all corners of the street. The people were holding their registration cards in their hands. Among the detainees

were young, old and middle aged people. Some detainees were already caught at night, other people were laying on the ground dead. Walking to work, I saw three women and eight men murdered. They probably tried to escape, or were armed. Perlmuter was telling us about the tragedies which took place in his courtyard. He resided on Panienska street. Fourteen people were shot in the courtyard, among them a woman with her three small children, two still on her hands, and a third one laying on the ground near the woman, across the street from the house. The husband of the murdered woman was in the Russian army. As proceeded to walk to work, I found out that the Action began in the middle of the night in the city. All the streets were closed off. I went to work at dawn. Already at that time, open trucks were taking Jews or to the Janow camp, or, later on, straight to the train station. [96] Imagine our hearts, our pain, our concerns about what was happening in our homes. The question was: "Was there anybody home to come back to. Yosel took Pepe with him to the shoe factory on Marcina street. He hid her in a hay attic. She was save there, even though, everyday, a few times a day, trucks arrived in the factory, and the bandits hurriedly entered the factory. They locked all the doors, and checked every man's and woman's identity card, looking for stranger [people who did not belong in the factory]. The director of such a factory always had to give his word that he did not harbor strangers. Yosel smuggled Pepe into the factory, on a wagon of hay so no one would find out. from time to time, Yosel used to spend the night in the factory, early in the morning go home, and later in the day return to work. Because he had a horse and rig, he had a permit which allowed him to move freely in the streets during the work hours. The Action was shifting from section of the city to another. People were being dragged from

all kinds of holes. No place was save to hide in. Old, young, people who barely stood on their feet, were being packed into assembly places. Among them was also a cashier named Pepe. People from around the area of the highway were brought to the assembly point. Both the Lemberg Sobieski school and bridge had a special place in the Jewish tragedy. Thousands of victims were murdered there during the Action, and the relocation of Jews from surrounding streets to the Jewish quarter. At present, during the September Action, the school was once again an assembly point. The Jews were brought there at night, and at dawn with open trucks, while during the day, they were taken, exclusively, with the trolley. All the places were guarded with police and Ukrainian police. And the Jews who were brought to Janowski street camp, they were counted as they entered the main gate. It seemed like the German foretold what kind of end awaits the Jews. [97] In the meantime the Jews were being annihilated. On the walls of Lemberg appeared warning addressed to all Jewish inhabitants: "Anybody hiding or helping a Jew or hiding one will be condemned to death". The notice was signed by the well known Lemberg general, police and SS commander, Katsman. People who one day will be interested in our present tragedy, will be able to write about this mass murderer. There was yet another murderer, a special expert on the Jewish question, a known sadist Webke. I leave it to others to research all this. I only mentioned two three big fish [in the German destruction machine of the Jews]. We all worked in Krajewski's workshop where we received our registration cards. We saw as an SS man pushed a young man and a small child off the roof of a three story house to the street. It happened across from our workplace. It happened that the man with the child wanted to hide out on the roof. From the same roof, I saw how on Damarstinowska

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street, where our workshop was located, two young men were killed. Everyday, we had problems and suffering. Groups of Jews were taken away including those who worked, without stamping their registration cards. Later on, people were taken who had and did not have stamped registration cards, all homebound elderly. Nothing was respected anymore. Everything was taken to the slaughterhouse. [Slowly we p 73K understood that everything goes to **death**. Everyday became harder to accept as I witnessed how parents were taken away. At work, every minute turned into a year. To make matters worse, I had to stay in the workshop till 4 PM in horrible worry and watch how children were taken away without parents, and parents without children. The lamenting and screaming from the abandoned was too horrendous to witness. People were shot in the streets, others who could walk or the sick were taken away in wagons to the assembly point. [98] It was not enough that the Christians did not want to help the Jews, but there actually special groups of Christians who pointed out entrances to Jewish hideouts. Small Christian children ran through the streets, yelling: "Jews, Jews". In this way they helped to destroy the Jews.

On many occasions, Szeva used to take off her armband, take a milk can on her back, put a shawl on her head like the village peasants, and escape from the house. The old man used to hide Zlata in my oven. Szlomo's stepmother used to hideout in the basement. Zlata was the only one with two children in the house, and Tepers in their apartment. Occasionally, very early in the morning, when only a few people were on their way to work, Szlomo used to take Laicia to work with him where he hid her in a crate full of leather scraps. On a few occasions, Laicia slept over in the crate so the overseer would not find out about it. Pepe had to abandon her hiding place

because other wealthy Jews brought in their wives, children, and parents, making the place not save. She came to our workplace in a wagon, actually she came to the Mesing place. Once, when Krajewski was out, I hid Pepe among a pile of wooden planks. She crawled in the middle of the pile, and I covered her with pieces of wood. She stayed hidden a whole night, while outside was raining cats and dogs. At dawn, I took her out. Diamensztein, Mesing's neighbor, spent the entire September Action in a basket of old szmates [=clothes]. Everybody was looking for any kind of hideouts. New public announcements appeared everyday contradicting the ones from the day before. "It's the last of the Action. The quota was met. We have more people than the quota required". The next day, the whole thing started all over again, except for one difference, it was worse. The Ukrainian police was bathing itself in Jewish blood. They searched through every godforsaken hole. They crawled into every nook where only a human being could possibly hide, using pocket flashlights to light it up. What made it worse was the fact that the civilian population was helping out in the process. All this influenced me so much that I felt like pieces of meat were falling off my body. I could not find a place [where I could find peace for myself]. [99] One day, early in the morning, a rumor spread about an Action which was about to take place near the highway. The Actions in this area took place at night and in the afternoon, rarely in the morning. On the day of the Action, Mechil took Abish to work with him. When Mechil approached the slaughterhouse, he saw many SS men. Everybody's registration card, Jew or Christian, was checked. Inside the building a search was going on. Someone reported to the Germans that Mr. Szmalc was keeping in his shop Jews who were not working for him. It was a known fact that Mr. Szmalc for money permitted the

families of his Jewish workers to stay in his meat shop. Fortunately, on that day no one was found. It is on the day of this Action that mechil took Abish to work with him. When Mechil saw what was happening, he turned back to go home, but the streets were already closed. Mechil always used Pogodna street to get to work. What should he do? He wanted to stop over in the home of a Christian acquaintance, but she refused to let him in. At one time, Mechil used to live there. The Christian woman, Bogocka, lived near Yosel Haberkorn's apartment. She was carrying on about the fact that only last Monday she barely escaped an arrest. She did not want to help, even though she liked to make a favor for a Jew. Mechil had no choice. He cried in front of her,, begging her to take the child to its mother. He was ready to give the woman anything she wanted. In the meantime, he had to run back to the gate where he worked because it was getting late. He left the child, but the woman did not take him over to his mother. She let him go home by himself. Small Abish, went alone from Pogodna street all the way to Bilinkiewicza street, with SS men and policemen everywhere. Its true nothing happened to him but he came home half the boy he left. You can imagine the heart and soul of the father, as he worked from seven o'clock in the morning to five in the afternoon. You can also imagine the mothers' eyes when she saw the child coming into the apartment alone, without the father, while the storm was raging in the Jewish street.

Sheva became sick. She could not get up from bed. She was visited a few times by a Christian doctor, but nothing seemed to help. She just could not stand up on her feet. [100] At this time, the entire town's committee, directed by the Jewish organization, was taken away. The committee consisted of various work divisions such as: carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, sweater and hat makers.

All worked for the city of Lemberg. Men, women, and young girls were taken away with their registration cards stamped. Hundred of workers were there, and all were taken away with stamped cards. At this point, we realized that the issue was not work but the destruction of the small number of Jews.

Zlata and the children in the detention camp.

[100] As I prepared to write this part, I remembered the moments when the terribly tragic incidents occurred. Incidents which ripped apart our Jewish hearts, at a time when the existence of Jewish families was shattered. We were ripped apart with dynamite and uprooted. At this time, I want to provide you with a short overview of what had happened to the family Eizen until this day, and follow it with a detailed description of their personal life. The day was Friday, as it's today, the 28th. I don't remember what month it was, possibly August.

Many people had already gone on the bitter road. The first one was 1. Ester with a small child, later 2. Rochele with the smallest children, the twins, 3. Yosel's only daughter Renia, 4. Abale, Ester's older son (Ester was taken away with the smaller child on her hand), 5. Yosel, 6. his brother-in-law, Yosel Hochberg, 7. his sister-in-law Chanale, a sister from Dorosziew, 8. Chanale's father and mother from Dorosziew, 9. Szaje Pardes' mother, sister, and child Mondzi. Now I would like to move on to the issue at hand. I could go on listing and counting people, but so far I had not mentioned anybody from the Sztromer family. At the time, Herman was already taken away.

[101] In the morning, we went to work. At 9 AM came in a foreman who just arrived from the slaughterhouse where Mechil was working. Mechil sent me a message through the foreman: "Zlata and both children were taken away". The carpentry shop had a special pass which gave one the right to walk the street [during working hours]. After I saved my life in the incident with the stamping of the document, such a pass was always ready for use. I took the document

which had my armband identity number written in it. At this point of the game, we ceased to be people. We were just numbers. Many of the people were not ready to accept this fact. Unfortunately, when they were finally were persuaded of the fact, it was too late for them to do anything about it. I really did not know what to do. I grabbed a passing carriage, and went to Mechil, who I believed was in the slaughterhouse. However, when I got there, he had already left. The landlord's daughter informed him about the tragedy, so he ran to the assembly point, located on Podzamcze street. Mechil was joined by our neighbor, Mr. Blank, who was also a worker in the slaughter-house. They took Blank's wife and his small, three year old daughter. I drove to the assembly point. When I arrived there, I saw Mechil standing near the entry, and asking a question while he was displaying a pass card as did Blank. The assistant director did not want to give Blank a card. Blank received the pass card from Mr. Szmalc, even though Blank did not work for Szmalc. Sztocki, the assistant director could not stand looking at a Jew. The German director, Mr. Makel, was a piece of gold in comparison with his assistant. Yet, Mechil's talk did not help. It was of no use. The three of us, including Blank, ran over to the gates, begging the bandits to help us. In response, they hit us repeatedly, telling us to leave immediately, otherwise they would rip up our registration cards and put us into the transport. We ran to from German to German. Then we traveled to Szmalc. [102] He told us that the day before, a wife of one of his workers was taken away. He took a car, and went to intervene on her behalf. When he met with a tall SS man, he was told: " Stop being interested in Jews". Szmalc replied that he was not interested in Jews but in the wife of one of his best meat workers. He was told that if he shows up one more time, the SS

officer should be notified immediately by telephone. It so happened that we talked to the same German barrack commander as did Mr. Szmalc the day before. After this confrontation, Szmalc saw no reason to meet again with the same German. We were ready to give him $ 250, the only money we had, but he refused to take it. We were looking for a solution. We ran around, but at the end nothing came out of it. Christian were moving among the masses of people. (Every few minutes another two open trucks left with victims on it.) I did know the Ukrainian policeman who took all of Zlata's furniture, the down quilts, and many other items. I saw him for the first time. However, Mechil knew him. The policeman came over to Mechil. When he saw us crying, he asked Mechil what was happening. He was dressed elegantly in civilian clothes. It quite possible that he worked for the Gestapo [= Gehaymish politsey]. After Mechil told him the story, the policeman promised to bring out Zlata for 2000 zloty. I told the man that I would give him 5000 zloty, if he would bring out the children as well. He asked for the money. I did not have all the money on me. Hurriedly, I ran to the Marstinowska street, to the Mesings. I wanted to ask them for a 2000 gilden [a currency during the Austrian-Hungarian rule in Galicja region]. Whether they did not have or did not want to give me the money, I don't know. The fact remained, I left their house empty handed. I worked with a young man named Gross. Before the war, his mother had a butter-eggs-cheese business. She was a very wealthy woman. I ran over to her. [103] She also lived on Marstinowska street, across from our workplace. She gave me 800 zloty without knowing me. She had the 200o zloty, but because she was alone at home as the Action was in progress in all the streets, she was afraid that she may remain without a penny at a time when she may have to buy herself out. I ran with the money to

Mechil. Without a care in the world, the bandit was having a conversation with an Ukrainian policeman in uniform. I gave the bandit the 800 zloty. I told him that my sister has on her 10000 gilden. He took the money, and I never saw him again in my life. In the meantime, we ran over, one more time, to the gate, but our talk was of no use. In the meantime, new trucks were being loaded. A teenage girl ran over to her old parents, screaming: "Mama, beloved mother", and ripped up her registration card. She was not one of the detainees. Zlata together with the children were put on a truck. I did not see her, only Blank, our neighbor, saw her. Again, I saw Blank's wife with a child on her hands. Also Zlata held Elisza on her hand, and Abish by the hand, as all three of them walked to the slaughter. I jumped toward the truck, but the SS men began to shoot at us from automatic weapons. The teenage girl and two other men were shot to death. For the last time, they all came to see their parents, children, and wives. It did not take long, maybe ten minutes, for the truck to be full. The trucks jammed with people, were surrounded by Szod police to prevent the people from escaping.

My dear family, I don't know whether you will ever have a chance to read this. However, I can tell you that I am about to face the situation. Today, I don't know what may happen to me in an hour. Yet, I can tell you that whoever has not seen all this, will live longer. Let God punish them. My heart is torn to pieces. At the moment when the truck left, a few hundred of Jewish, small, old, and all innocent souls, were erased from the registry of the living. [104] The scream on the open truck was: "Don't forgive them again". We went home with our heads hanging down on our chests, and with broken hearts. Oh God! When we came home, we found the apartment in a disarray. The only person who remained in the apartment was

Laicia. Szeva, Szlomo's father and mother were taken away a few days earlier. The Teppers, including both children, were not home. The home was empty. There was no one around. A horror scene. The pots in which my dear sister wanted to prepare for us the Shabbat meal were there; however, the owner of the pots was not there anymore. Mechil ran over to the coffee grounding box in which small Abish used to grind a bit of wheat. He kissed the wheat and four, screaming: "My dearest child grounded this wheat for his father, for the Shabbat. This was his job". Oh God, don't forgive the murderers for breaking us. Yet, the worst was about to come. At 7 AM, a truck arrived with Szofo and Ukrainian policemen, and moved into the narrow street. Christian children were pointing out the homes where Jews were residing. Szeva was lying in bed, and the old man did not hid himself yet. At the time, Zlata happened to be in the street, near the house. When she realized what was happening, she wanted but did not have enough time to hide herself. Both her children were in the backyard . Zlata grabbed a hammer which the landlady used to do something in the garden, and !!! ripped up the door in the latrine. Taking one son on her hands, while holding on to the other son, the three of them jumped into the horrible mess. The woman did not know that the latrine was full of feces, so much so that one could see only the heads. I write about this with blood. The small boy was screaming: "Mamo, ja tone, ratuj mnie" [(Polish in Yiddish letters; "Mamo, I am drowning, save me!!!"] [105] A mother wanting to save her children. Had she wanted to leave the children, she would have probably remained alive till this very day. At this moment, the bandits arrived. They found Zlata in this open toilet pit holding on to the two children. The landlady had a hand in this entire event. She wanted that her Zydki [Jews in Polish] should be taken away so

she should be free of them. According to Laicia, the Christian landlady had a verbal exchange with one of the bandits who spoke Polish. When the landlady saw that they did not take Laicia away, she intervened in an attempt to change their mind. The bandit went one more time into the apartment to check Laicia's identification card. When he returned to the shikse [= Christian woman] he told her that laicia'a papers are in order, and he can't touch her. Laicia heard what the bandit said because he was talking very loud. He did not understand that the landlady did not want Laicia to know that she squealed on her. It's possible that the SS man would never had looked for Zlata in the latrine had it not been for the fact that someone told him about it. I am sure about it. They ordered Zlata to come out. First she put up on the ground her two son, and then she followed. All three of them were covered from head to toe in feces. They were ordered to undress, get into a tub, and wash up. Mechil and I gathered their clothes and threw them out. After they washed up, Zlata rubbed on herself and the children Mechil's aftershave cologne. Then one of the men escorted Tepper with the children, Szeva, and the old Baric to the truck, while the other man remained with Zlata. She wanted to ask him but before she opened her mouth, he beat her without mercy. He also beat the children. They were naked at the time. The mother shielded the children with her body. She received most of the whip lashes. [106] I saw her cut up back with my own two eyes. The children had blue marks on their little bodies. The man shot a few time from his revolver in the apartment. At that point the second man returned to the room. Zlata and the children got dressed. Zlata put on the children the best clothes. She also put on the Winter coat and a shawl on the head. It was the month of AV [Hebrew month equivalent to the month of August/

September]. She began to ask the second man who was older: "Maybe", she said to the man, "you also have a wife, children. Let me live a trifle longer. I was just fifty? years old. I had not lived yet. Here, take my diamond ring. Take it for your wife, and let me and my children go, or leave my children with my cousin (Laicia) and take only me". He might have let her go but the other murderer walked into the room and once again began to beat her. This time the three of them were dressed already. Later on, Zlata told me that she intentionally put on her and her children so many layers of clothing so they would not feel the hits. Furthermore, the extra clothing was helpful to them in camp. Oh how helpful was the clothing in camp with all the murderers-sadists around. They were loaded on the truck and taken away. Oh what kind of Friday we had. I did not lie down, eat, or sleep. Mechil walked around crazy. The sheygets [= CHristian boy], the landlady's son, upon coming home from work, took out his guitar and began playing all kinds of Mazurkas and Polkas. At that item, we were not in the mood to listen to any kind of music. On this particular Friday, I swore to myself that if I'll live through all this, I would pay back the szeygets for all that he had done. He was saying: "Durna zydowka. Ona skoczyla do ustepu" [Polish in Yiddish letter; = "The stupid Jewess jumped into the latrine".] After such needling words, I had a plan to take immediate revenge on the boy. I wanted to leave the house, and later on come back and burn it down. The boys mother could not take anymore of his needling words. The whole Staszek [name] was a brat, but what was important that he was an Aryan. [107] On Saturday we left the house. We made Laicia a hideout under the closet, and told the landlady that Laicia was coming with us. We gave the landlady the keys to our and Tepper apartment. We understood that she would do everything possible to

get into our apartment. From every apartment where the Jews were evacuated, the furniture, clothes, and everything else worth taking was removed. The removals were executed by special brigades called the Szofa [mentioned earlier in the translation]. Szofa employed Jews from the camp. The cleaning was done with fires. They were known as the cleaning brigade. Wherever people were evacuated from their apartment, the place was sealed off with a seal, and the key was given to the cleaning brigade. However, our landlady could not accept the fact that we were not removed. The moment we left, she opened the apartment and ransacked it. She turned over the beds. All this time, Laicia was sitting under the closet. It was Zlata's white closet. The closet stood in the corner of the room. The landlady took all the good things from the Tepper apartment. We had a jar of broiled fat which she took away. She also took the salt, as well as the wood which I used to bring home from the carpentry workshop. However, we had a feeling that if she were to move into our apartment, she would not give us any peace. At first, she ripped up everything. So we closed up everything. She threw everything on the floor and took apart the beds. When we returned, she told us that the SS was there and searched for the missing individuals. Frustrated from coming up empty handed, they broke everything in the apartment. Laicia was sitting in her place and heard what was going on. Staszek was good for nothing bandit, Hitlerowiec [= Hitler sympathizer]. I used to hear him say: "I would stab all the Jews with my own two hands". This was the kind of person we had to live with under one roof. He was the one who informed on Szlomo's stepmother.

One time, at 5 PM in the afternoon, after work, an Action was taking place around the highway. It so happened that two Ukrainians

were passing by as the good for nothing Staszek was coming home from work. He was employed in a German firm in town. He informed the passing by Ukrainians that in the building number 13 lived two old people who were not employed, neither did they have registration papers. The old woman was lying hidden in a pile of corn, while I stuffed Szlomo's father into the oven, my former hideout. The two Ukrainian came in like murderers, saying: "Where are you two old Jews. Jew or Jewess tell us where you are. You all will go." [= in Ukrainian, written in Yiddish letters: "Gdie je tu dwa stari Zidi. Zidowka o Zid, skazy gdie wy. Wsie pudietie". They found the woman because Stach [variation of Stasiek, Staszek, etc.] climbed on the roof of the outside latrine, saw the woman, and immediately reported to the Ukrainians her whereabouts. She was taken away. You can imagine her screaming and crying. She was a wise Jewish woman. She realized what was awaiting her. As the two Ukrainians search the apartment, a drunk SS commander walked in. He was a tall, strong brute. "Everyone out" [a German phrase, written in Yiddish letters: "Ales heroys"] a phrase the Germans used at every Action and arrest. We were sure that we were goners. He lined us up in the courtyard: Yosel, Szeva, Laicia, Zlata, and Mechil. At the time, small Abisz was sleeping in the apartment of the Teppers, and therefore was not with us. The SS man took all our registration cards, and said: "If I find someone in the apartment, we all be taken away, and he will immediately rip up our registration cards". They looked for the old Baricz but did not find him. When he left us, he took all the cards with him. By taking the cards we were sentenced to death. The policemen were holding the old woman. The SS man returned, and took everyone's registration card into his hand. We were still standing with the hats in our hands. At this point Szeva had to get dressed.

The policemen arrived when the SS man began to ask us who had a registration card. Everyone who had a card was told to move to the side. [109] The only one who remained standing in the middle of the courtyard was our dear Abish. "To whom does he belong?" the SS man asked. Zlata said: "Mr. Officer". "I am not an officer", the murderer replied. "Let him go inside". Only later on, we found out that the German stopped in the apartment of the Hungarian where he was drinking heavily. They were not planning to search through our gesl [= a small street]. However, the one who brought upon us the whole wedding [an expression meaning an incident] was the scoundrel [our landlady's son]. Oh, if I could only live to see the day when the Russian would come. At the time, we did not know why the German was looking at Abish. Later on we found out that on this particular day they had an Action for catching children. During this Action the following people were taken away: Renia, and Abish - Ester's son. In the Action before Passover, the son's grandson of Szprocer from Liczakow, a baker, who lived with Yosel, was taken away. Mechil friends', a well know singer, two children, similar in age to that of Zlatas' children, were also taken away.

children action

I could not understand why my sister jumped into the pit. At one point, we discussed the possibility of making there a hideout. Mechil was blaming me for not hiding my sister in the basement, even though he knew well that Ignatowicz [the landlady] with her children would not permit a Jew to remain alive. Later on, my sister told me that she wanted to save the children. However, because she had no other place where to hide, she thought that this place was the best choice available to her. When she jumped in, understandably, it was not so full. Only later, the "filth" in the pit reached their necks.

Dear beloved brother, if I'll live to see you, I'll show you all

these places. I'll show you our beloved homes where we spent our last bitter weeks, days, and hours. If I could share with you, my dear brother, my experiences, and release some of the burden from my poisoned heart, I may possibly feel better. I may even be able to cry. These experiences cold be told only to a brother, a sister, or a Jew. Oh, dear brother, it has been some time since I last spoke Yiddish. If I could only tell all this to my dear Marinia [110] as we hug each other. I believe, dear brother, that there is one country which could pay for our disaster, and that is the Soviet Union.

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An impossible event (or half way in the other world and saved)

[110] To get out of the Janow camp, and with two children to boot, was like returning from the other world, and from there one could only come back dead, or, in the best of situations, a man who was already assigned to a work detail,could be allowed to flee by his foreman. However, in thy September Action, in the camp, there were people who were loaded with money, yet could not buy themselves out. In camp, gold- gold dollar coins - diamonds were thrown around like garbage. The known SS men in camp, ran around the camp looking for people with baskets full of paper money, dollars, zloty. They were shouting: "Who won't give up the money will be shot". Jews were throwing all the valuables they had on their person. Others buried it in the sand, unwilling, even though they had to give it away anyway. All people were sitting down on the ground. The sun was burning. Some people had nothing to eat or drink for a few days. When they asked for a drink, they were told that there was no water for the Jews. "You get poison". Small children, from hunger, bit their fingers so hard that blood was dripping from the finger. One small child went so far as to lick blood from hit killed mother who was lying on the sand.

A few months later, on more than one occasion, I walked on the sand where people were beaten and killed. This was the central location where everybody going to Belzec had to pass through. The people went through a terrible fire, or were exterminated in Belzec, and then their corpses were burned. I am not telling here fairy tales. At a later date, you will discover that everything what I described here was in gray [sad] colors. [111] I can't write about

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these things because I get an intense pounding in my head.

It's Friday evening. I put away my writing. I would like it should be already Sunday, and, God willing, I should go on with my writing. I don't write on Shabbat.

Sunday, April 30, 1944

It's Sunday, the last day in April. Everything I write here are mere fragments of the suffering we experienced. Because there is not enough paper to tell the entire story about what we endured on an everyday basis, and secondly, the man does not want to remember everything which happens to him. In camp Zlata met her mother-in-law, Mechil's mother. Throughout the whole period, Ester lived with her mother. They left their apartment near the highway. Until the September Action, she lived with Hersz-Leib Sztromer in a house which was located on a street [from the description in the text, it seems that the family lived on the edge of town, bordering with the fields. Many of the homes were not on street, but rather scattered in the field.] which was located on the other side of the railroad tracks. The name of the street was Cardinal Traub. The family was forced to evacuate the apartment because the landlord demanded their removal. So, Hersz-Leib moved to Zolkewska Street 65, and Ester with her mother moved to Marczina Street 41. From there, Ester with her younger child were taken away fourteen days before the mother. The old Eizen with a few other Jews from the house were all the time hiding in the attic. Once they were all in the attic, they pulled up the ladder. Everyday, Zlata cooked food for her mother-in-law, and at dawn, when I was going to work, I took the food over to them so they could have it for the entire day. At 4 PM when I was going home, I always brought for her [Zlata's mother-in-law] cherries or sour cherries so it would make her heart feel better. Whenever it was "peaceful" in the street, Mechil also used

to jump over to them from the slaughterhouse to see his mother and bring them something. I used a basket, which I filled with food, and, with a long stick, handed it up to the people in the attic. At 4 PM, on the way home, I collected the empty pots so I could bring them food again the following day. It took a lot of sweat to get the food up to the attic. In the courtyard lived a blacksmith who was constantly visited by strangers. Because of it, we had to watch that no one should see the hideout. Last Friday, in the morning, I took the food to them. The elder Eizen took out all pots and the bread from the basket. I can still see her as she stood at the edge of the attic trap door, wearing glasses and holding a prayer book in her hand. This was the last time I saw her. I never saw her again. I left the pots where they were because at the time when we went to inquire about Zlata, we found out that Mechil's mother with the other people who were hiding out in the attic, at the time, were taken away. Zlata also met in camp, Hersz's wife - Szeindele, and uncle Meir-Leibisz. Also Tepper was with Zlata in camp through the entire period. Hersz Lind Worim's daughter had a friend near the highway [area], someone named Grinberg. She with her only child, a five year old girl, went to the transport [going to camp].

Later on, the children were telling me how they saw small children and elderly people being shot. How they [the newly incoming children] gave their food to those who were already in the selection area for 2-3 days without food. The continuous selections decided who would be shot on the spot, and who would be sent to Belzec. Out of the blue, in the huge crowd of people, Zlata noticed Feigi, the daughter of her mother-in-law's daughter, Rachel. When Feigi saw Zlata together with her grandmother, (Zlata stayed together with her mother-in-law), she exclaimed in surprise "ciotka" [Polish; = aunt]

or "ciocia"[a variation of ciotka]. Yet, she was not as surprised to see her grandmother. Her fear was further increased because her sister Chanale, since their mother was taken away, was hiding together with her two small children and youngest sister Sima in our apartment. Among others who were hiding in our place was Hersh Leib's only son Motek. Feigi was sure that all of them were taken away at one time. However, the fact was that very early in the morning, all of them went to the basement and hid there. Our landlady did not know that we kept outsiders in our house, because if she did, she would have gone looking for them. They stayed hidden so our landlady would not know about them. Because of this series of events, on that particular Friday, Hersz-Leib's three children were saved. Feigi also used to visit our place as she was running around looking for her mother. [113] She had a stamped registration card. She worked for one of the largest German clothing firms called Szwartz and Co. It was reported that Rachela was walking in the Christian designated streets without an armband, and her daughter was running around looking for her. The daughter was caught during working hours, and was taken away to the Janow camp with a registration camp where she met Zlata. At 4 PM she saw Hersz-Leib. He was caught in the Action but permitted to work in camp as a glazier. He was not sent away with the transport. When he saw his Feigi, he let go of such a frightful scream, that in spite of the fact that there were thousands of people present at the place, they all heard his scream. Feigi was his hope, [he thought she would survive], especially that his oldest daughter did not have any documents. She worked for the Jewish community where the registration cards were not stamped. And here she was, his last hope, Feigi, was lost too. All this was made even worse when he saw

his mother-in-law and Zlata. It so happened that Yosel Eizen was also permitted to work in camp. So Hersz realized that his 3 children who remained outside the camp, if they were still alive, were without any means to live and chance to survive. Hersz's entire family was in camp. Feigi's outcry was not any quieter than her fathers, but somehow it was lost in the screams of the thousands of people. Hersz Leib was on the other side of the fence, while the ones who were loaded unto the transport trains were surrounded by a fence, separate from the world, in an awful sandy place. Zlata had on her $ 400 wrapped in a handkerchief. She threw the money over the fence and Hersz-Leib grabbed it. The guards from the watch towers who constantly observed the area, opened fire. Hersz-Leib joined immediately his group, and Zlata mingled with the people around her. Immediately, a few SS men came down from the towers and searched for the person who threw something over the fence. However, from among the thousands of people, they could not find out who did it. [114] At 7 PM in the evening, arrived the director of the Szwartz firm, Mr. Glick, a German party man. The Szwartz firm employed about 3,000 workers, most of them Jews. It was the biggest firm to employ mostly Jews. The director came to intervene on the behalf of the Jews who worked for him and were rounded up with stamped registration cards. The German opened fire from automatic weapons with a few rounds, and the huge crowd of people turned silent. The familiar camp commander, SS unter-szturm furer Wilhem asked: "Who works for the Szwartz firm and Co.. Only the workers from the firm should come forward. Anybody else who does not work for the firm and will come forward will be shot". My dear sister understood that this was an opportunity for Feigi to escape from the fire. Feigi saw her director in the company of another German employee from the Szwartz firm, Mr. Klopotek. Next

to them stood the head of the Jewish workers organization, Weber, and a group of SS men. They began to check the registration cards of people who were employed by the Szwartz firm. Zlata asked Feigi to save her [Zlata's] two little souls, while she [meaning Zlata] had no choice but to remain. She knew she would not pass inspection. She told Feigi to tell the Germans that the two boys were her brothers and she was supporting them. Maybe, just maybe they would let them go. Feigi took the children. You can imagine my sister's heart. She said goodbye to her children, and handed them over to Feigi. The two children refused to go without their mother. Finally Zlata persuaded them to go with Feigi. Hurriedly, Feigi ran over to her director and showed him her registration card. As "fate" would have it at that particular moment, a Jewish woman standing next to the group of men who were conducting the inspecting of the registration cards, took poison because Wilhelm, the camp commander did not let go. As the group was preoccupied watching the unfortunate woman, Feigi [115] with the two boys ran over to the chosen luckiest people. Zlata looked at the children. She did not know what to do. At the end, she made up her mind, said goodbye to her mother-in-law, and walked over to the inspection station. As she did not have any documents in her hands, the chevra [= group of men inspecting the documents] began to beat her across the face and legs with riding whips. During the beating, Zlata was screaming that she was working for the Szwartz [firm], and her registration card was torn up during a check. They decided to question her. It so happened that Feigi while visiting us, used to talk about her job. As a result, Zlata knew in which section Feigi worked, and the name of Feigi's foreman. Furthermore, whenever Zlata used to send Feigi outside with the children, she exchanged coats with her. It should be noted that Feigi's coat had

an armband with an identity number on it. The director of the factory knew the numbers of his Jews because the numbers assigned to his Jews, inscribed on the armbands were in consecutive order. At the end the number on Zlata's coat decided her fate. She was permitted to pass to the other side of the fence. Imagine the joy on the part of the children, when they saw their mother coming towards them. All the time Zlata was on the other side of the fence, they were screaming "Chcemy do mamy" [Polish in Yiddish letters; = "We want to go to mommy"]. That Friday, at 9 PM in the evening, Zlata was brought back, half way from the other world, to the city in an open truck. A truck which only a short time earlier brought to the camp a group of unfortunate Jews. Zlata and her children were saved this time, a real rarity. It seemed that they were destined to suffer from the Germans another few months. And during that time go through hell, and hide in basements while choking from lack of air. They fought for a thread of hope that somehow things would get better. We were happy that they [Zlata and the children] were alive for another ten months. For the sake of the loved ones, we accepted whatever we lived through. On more than one occasion, my sister used to say: "I would settle for just a plain potato, if they would let me alone to live with my children and husband. Only to live. Yet it was the precious life which was robbed from the Jews, and until such time when the last of the Jews would be exterminated, the Germans continued to evacuate the Jews and exterminate them. There was no way to save oneself, even the people who had fortunes to pay for it. [116] The Jews wanted to save themselves or the children, but the bandits thought of ways to exterminate them. Until the September Action, many Jews with armbands used to walk through the Christian quarter. Later on, every passerby in the street had his documents

checked. In the case of the Jewish man, it was easy to check who they were. Its possible that some women sneaked to Germany and worked there, and possible even remain alive. However, a woman who had two boys [like my sister] could not have saved herself. I hope that after the war, the Germans would not be permitted to organize a new government. They must be wiped off from the map, otherwise we will never have peace. They must be eliminated like a bad snake without leaving a trace behind them.

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XI

In the Szwarc factory (or in [the business] of supplies and money)

[116] Friday night, Zlata and her children were brought to the Szwarc factory. The workplaces were located on Marczina Street, and were part of an entire complex of buildings. The first building was located across from the Podziamcze train station, while the rest of the buildings continued all the way to the corner of Panienska street. The people were brought to the factory at night. Right after the people arrived in the factory,they received some food. Like many other factories, Szwarc factory had a kitchen for its workers. Once a day, all the workers received hot soup. During this period, many of the workers did not go home. They stayed in the factory, because many times it was safer than at home. As I mentioned earlier, on Saturday, I and Mechil went to work. On the way, I sat down on a stone and fell asleep from tiredness [did not sleep most of the previous night]. [117] At one point, Mechil woke me up, and gave me the good news - Zlata and the children were safe, and in the Szwarc factory. Mechil was holding a shovel in his hand so would look like he was on his way to work. I got up, and without taking the street pass, began to run with Mechil. It was Hersz Bowald's daughter, who happened to work in the factory, that told Mechil about Zlata. We came to the factory. At the gate stood a guard, a man named Garfinkel. He opened the gate for us, and we entered the factory grounds. Inside the factory was like a flea market, full with thousands of workers. The workers spent more time wandering

around than working. I detected Zlata right away. You can imagine our happiness. "Where are the children" I asked Zlata. I just could not believe that both Zlata and the boys escaped this murderous place. Then I saw the small Elish and Abish. They jumped on our hands, exclaiming: "Tato-wujcio" [Polish in Yiddish letters; = "dad - uncle"]. Everybody was staring at us. They must had taken us for the luckiest Jews. Very often, we heard another outcry: "Where is the director? They took away my mother and father." At this time, the action was still going on. Soon, we were given to understand that all those who did not work in the factory must leave the premises, because all the people who were brought from the camp would be registered, an receive cards. The SS would approve the registration cards with an official seal. However, the people who smuggled themselves out of the camp but never worked in the factory should leave the place by 12 midnight. After that hour, the director would call upon the SS to take all of these people back to camp. Imagine our situation. What could we do? Where could we hide [Zlata and the children]? We were the luckiest people to had brought three souls from the other world. But now, what could we do with them? We ran over o the Christian woman where Ester was living, ad we asked her if she could hide them out? [118] It was a waste of time. We continued to run to every possible hiding place we knew about. I and Mechil decided to run over to the slaughterhouse, too see Mr. Szmalc. He was about to leave. Many managers like Szmalc left during the September Action so they would not have to intervene on behalf of their Jewish workers. It's possible that the suggestion to leave came from the German authorities. What could we do? We had no other choice but to bring the children back to Bilinkiewicza street [where we were living]. Hopefully, the landlady and her children would not

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be at home This would permit us to smuggle the children into the basement without them knowing about it. We had no other choice. But how does one take them back to the house while the Action in full swing. In the slaughterhouse [where Mechil was working] we found a covered military truck. I found the driver, and told him what was the problem. We were ready to pay him very well for the service rendered. But the driver was afraid during such hard times to take into the truck a woman and two children. We asked Mr. Szmalc to lend us his luxurious limousine. He agreed to give us the car but only after 2 PM in the afternoon. Ad here we were told that Zlata and the children must leave the factory by 12 noon. It was getting late. We cold not do anything. We went back to our dear souls [Zlata and the children]. When we returned, we addressed one by the name Szwarc - a Jew with influence in the factory. By chance his name was the same as the name of the factory. Zlata already spoke to him. He wanted a diamond ring for his help. But [as I mentioned earlier], an Ukrainian policeman took Zlata's ring when she was still in the truck on Bilinkiewicza street. In return, the Ukrainian promised to let Zlata and her children go. But what Zlata really received was a few blows with the butt of his rifle. So obviously, at this time she had no ring to give Mr. Szwarc. I don't want to write too much about it. We had $ 247. which we gave it to him so he would take care of our 3 souls than throw them out into the street. He took us into a wooden chamber. There he took from me the money, and putting his left hand on his head - he was not wearing a hat - [119], and giving me and Mechil the right hand, he asked us to give him our word that we would not tell anyone how and for how much we took care of the problem. He registered Zlata on the spot. She had to remain in the factory until such time when she would receive a seal, the red seal,

of approval from the SS. However, we had to take the children home. We begged him to hide the children for us. He did hide them in the attic. We also gave the gateman a piece of meat for taking an interest in Zlata. It was obvious that we could no stay there. We also asked Garfinkel [the gateman] to provide them [Zlata and the children] with water so could take a bath and wash the filth from the sand. Then we went home. Upon arrival home, I prepared food which Mechil took over to the factory. At the same time, we brought with us Feigi's registration card which we gave to her sister Chanale. Somehow, we managed to sneak Chanale into the factory. And because Feigi got a new card, claiming that her card was destroyed, Chanale remained working in the factory. Then Feigi submitted her sister's picture for her new registration card, and, like Zlata, had to wait for an official approval. Szwarc knew about the substitutions and additions which were going on in the factory. And because Chanale was Mechil sister's children, he helped out in the situation. Secondly, the $ 247 spoke for itself. And so, this was the way Zlata, Feigi, Chana and Sima found their way to the factory. Though Sima and both of Zlata's children were unlawful guests in the factory; yet, they stayed there on Shabbat, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, until such time that they could not remain any longer. All this meant bitter problems for me. I was the man in charge. I had to work everyday, and cook for six people in the factory, as well as for those at home: Mechil, Motek, and myself. In the meantime I had not an ounce of flour, sugar or fat. [120] Meat and buckwheat [kasha] were two food products which I did have for quite some time. In one word, I had nothing. The only produce which was in the house was 20 kg. of ungrounded wheat. Everyday, after work, I ran to my Christian neighbor to grind two kg. of wheat in a hand held grinder. While

Laicia kneaded the flour for the cookies, I baked them on top of the stove. For such items as 2 kg. of corn, a few bundles of carrots, a head of cabbage, and some green peas, I battered with my Christian neighbors, all kind of old clothes. Everyday, I managed to put together a good pot of soup, and together with the cookies I baked, I took the food to the factory. Every so often, Mechil used to bring home a piece of liver or meat. All I could bring home was wood shavings. I stopped bringing home pieces of wood because for one, it was too heavy to carry home, and two, the landlady used to take it away. We always used to leave the key to the apartment with the landlady, while Laicia used to hide at the time under the closet. A few times, Mechil brought home a baby cow [=calf]. You know what it is - not a fulled fledged calf. We had a ball with it. The meat did not have to cook too long. I cut it up into pieces, broiled it with an onion, and at one point added water. The meat made a wonderful meal. To the meat, i used to add borsht from young beats together with its green leaves. On many occasions, I used bake the flat cookies until 12 midnight. At times when I made the cookies from corn flour, they became glued to my palms and fingers, and to the baking pan. I used to wet my hands every time I was about to make a cookie and place it on the pan. By the time the cookies were ready, and I was ready to go to bed, it was usually 2 PM at night. I used to lay down in bed in my clothes, because I was too tired, and had only 3-4 hours of sleep left. I had to run to Zlata to bring her the food. When the food was ready, I used to bring the food to the basement so it could cool off. The ones who were hiding in the basement, had a gas stove on which they could warm up the food. [121] It's hard to believe what was going on in such factories. People were swelling up from hunger. People were cooking in the

factory. A person who had 1ϕϕ grams of deer meat were considered counts. Many workers in the factory lived from the one daily portion of soup they received in the factory. The rest of the time they fasted. Every time I brought the pots of food to Zlata, she gave away a part of it to her co-workers in the same working group who were dying from hunger. Yet, there were enough Jews who ate butter with bread as for example Szwarc. He was taking bribe money in the name of the director for favors rendered, and then keep the money for himself. He was eating white rolls with butter and ham. They were many Jews like him. However, at the end, the ones who went hungry and the ones with money, both died in Belzec [concentration camp] because to the Germans all Jews were equal. After the September Action, there were less swollen people from hunger in the streets. Most of the people who were caught in the Action happened to be swollen from hunger. Fortunately for the ones who remained, Jews were giving and receiving greater support from each other, even the Jews who up to this point thought they would need their money after the war would end, were ready to give.

Wednesday, before noon, around 10 AM, Sima and both children came to me. They were told that an Action would take place in the factory on that day. Zlata and Chana were not afraid because they were registered in the factory. However, Sima and the children had to be hidden. What to do with three people in my courtyard. Fortunately, no one noticed them. I took them to Bilinkewicza street. It so happened that the street we walked on was quiet. I knew that this was the best time [to come home]. During this time, the small bandit [the landlady's son] was at work, the szikse [= Christian woman, landlady's daughter] was visiting a friend, and the old lady [landlady] used to visit her neighbor and work in the

garden. When we got home, it happened to be empty. As we walked in the street, I covered Abish's face with a kerchief, [122] and Sima held Elan close to her skirt so no one would notice him. When we reached the house, the main gate was open, and I had spare keys to all the other doors. I took the three children to the basement, the safest place. I wanted to take Pepe to our basement, but it was impossible to take through the streets. On that Wednesday, there was a terrible slaughter in the factory. All children were taken away, irrespective where they were found, including the family of the gatekeeper. They took away his wife and his only child. The Jewish workers kept their children under their work tables, in a pile of thrown around army coats awaiting repairs. The children were wrapped in coats and carried to another courtyard where the SS men had already searched the premises for the Jews. An open truck full of people was taken away from the factory. Fortunately, our children left the place where they were hiding for five days just before the Action began, and so were saved. Hurriedly, I went back to the factory and ran over to the window near which Zlata was working at a sawing machine. The window happened to be on the street level. I told her the good news that I smuggled the three children through the streets. You can imagine what my sister went through, not knowing if I succeeded to smuggle the children through the streets, and witnessing what was going on in the factory. She could not had known that the quarter i walked through was quiet. I told Zlata that on the way back to the factory, I met the shikse [Christian woman] on her way to the house where we were living. Zlata quieted down when she heard about the Shikse. She knew that if the young shikse was home, without knowing that someone was hiding there, no one would search the house for Jews. Then she told me that she would say

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that she going to wash her head. What could we do, we were almost sure here. We had no other choice. We always gave something to the Christian woman for watching our house. At a later date, anytime the SS had [123] put fire to apartments with the Jews in it, we told the Christian woman the following: "anytime the Germans find an apartment with no Christian in , they just burn it down. As a result of our statement, the Christian woman sat at home all the time. My dearest family and friends, it's indescribable what we had suffered from the small Stach [a derivation from the name Stasiek, the landlady's son]. We did not tell the Christian woman about Zlata's release. Early Shabbat morning, the small bandit began to pour salt on my open wound by saying: "Abosz an Elisz are not here anymore. They will definitely be made into toilet soup within the next two weeks" [= Polish in Yiddish characters: "Jusz niema Abosza i Elisza. Jusz napewno znich toaletowe mydlo za dwa tygodni bedzie.]

We had to keep quiet because we did not have another apartment. We just could not argue with he Christians. On many occasions we asked the szikse [= Christian woman] to let Abisz stay in her apartment as if he was her brother, but she refused to hear about it. My sister was always full of Jewish pride. She used o say: "I don't give my child just to anybody. I don't trust the Christians. Yet, I want to live with them, and live to see the day when changes will take place, or die with them." Yes, dear sister you escorted them on their last journey. Dear parents, if I only knew that my suffering for the past nine months would lead to an objective. It seemed like it became quiet on the fronts. Everyday I hope that the front would break, and the Russians would come. I hope and pray continuously. From the direction of the front, we hear shooting and bombing. However, because I had no newspaper for the past eight days, I have

no idea what it taking place in general. About Friday, Zlata and Chanah received the necessary identification documents. Upon getting the documents, all went home. The landlady could not believe. She opened wide her eyes. We did not tell anybody about the children because we were not sure about their safety. When we showed Stach [landlady's son] the papers with the seals, we did not tell him about when and what was arranged so he would not have a reason to send in [the Ukrainians]. Zlata went back to work in our home kitchen. I would prefer to suffer my entire life, not to eat and sleep, if only I could take care of my dearest parents, sister with her children, and the rest of all my dearest family. Unfortunately, it seemed like this was the 'deportation' station, and I had to experience and go through the entire German Gehenom [= hell]. [124] and be a witness to it all. Everyday, I lived through something else and various degrees of fears. Till this very day, things continue to deteriorate. Part of the Polish population is moving out of Jagonie across the river Son. The Polaks are afraid of the Ukrainians who burn their homes and kill many of the Poles in the process. If the Christians in our area move out, I remain stranded in water. I can't step out into the street because every kid knows me and would turn me in to the same murderers who murdered the other Jews. The same murderers are also here in Kaminke. This is the reason why I say one more time that [liberation] it's so close and yet so far away. My situation has not changed, irrespective of the fact that yesterday the Germans were near Moscow or Stalingrad, and today the Russians are near Brody, Tarnopol, Kovel, or Laicin. However, God can help. There is a Jewish proverb which says: "The man thinks, and God laughs".

The loss of Pepe

[124] Pepe and her sister were hiding together with the Mesings in a factory chimney. It so happened, the chimney was located in the same courtyard where the Mesings resided and I worked. They actually were hiding in the chimney. Pepe's aunt happened to have a registration card. However, because her daughter was living with her in the same apartment and also carried a card of a housewife, the aunt did not want two housewives in one apartment. Lately, the situation became so bad that even legitimate registration cards were not respected. So the aunt decided to hide together with Pepe. An Ukrainian worker employed in a small factory producing brass door handles, took from Mandik Mesing a few hundred zloty for letting the Jews into the chimney. I was sure that no one knew about it. On Saturday, I spoke to Mandik. I asked him if Wasilka knew that the family was hidden in the chimney. He assured me that no one knew about it. I said to Mandik: "Maybe the szeigec [= Christian] knows", in which case they should abandon the hideout that very night. He gave me his hand, and assured me that no one knew about it. Satisfied with the answer, I went home with a quiet heart. [125] In the meantime Wasilka and no one else knew about it. On Sunday I went to see Pepe. She was in the hideout. The same Sunday afternoon, Wasil got drunk on Mandik's money, went to the Ukrainian police and told them about the hideout. A Shofawicz [member of a special unit] together with two policemen came right away to the chimney, and fired into it. Two Jewish souls were taken out, and put into the waiting truck. Can you imagine, the Mesings were ready to give any amount of money they were asked. Mondik was not bashful. He pushed into the hand of the szofu a few thousands zloty. In addition he

promised him an English coffee. The man took the two souls back out of the truck, when someone from the building began to scream: "For money you let them go." The Mesing woman was very smart. [Realizing the situation], she grabbed the son of the young woman who was yelling from the building, and was about to enter the building. However, the szofu [men from the special unit] became agitated, and pushed her back unto the truck. The szofu knew only about the two women, not about the child who was also in the hideout. In this manner Pepe's destiny came to an end. No attempt to help was successful, even though all kinds of ways were sought. Nothing helped. Mesing's brother-in-law together with his wife worked for the SS in the camp on Czwartaki Street. On Sunday, the Mesing's sought a favor from their brother-in-law. Unfortunately, on Monday, the camp commander ordered, personally, Mrs. Sztraik to leave the camp with the next outgoing transport. Sztraik lived in the apartment of his brother-in-law Mesing. Also Josel Haberkorn and Lonik moved in there. The German gave an order that three people had to occupy one square meter of space. So families tried to stay together. My dearest Pepe, who knows better than I how much you had suffered, how many problems you lived through because of me from your own mother. We understood each other. Your mother wanted that my parents should transfer their fortune to her. I would rather fast [126] than write my parents about money. I knew what they were suffering and the kind of problems my parents lived through everyday. We were happy with the destiny which was beating on us with increased bitterness. Dearest Pepe, at the time when I don't know what tomorrow can bring, I asked your forgiveness for the fact that you had a rich bridegroom. I believe that I did not do to you any harm. You know how much I suffered because of your mother who

recognized only money. However, we both had to remain silent about the matter because it was the mother. You, the dearest Pepe, the one who carried the name of my deceased grandmother, Perl; you were pure like a pearl. You fell, like thousands of Jewish daughters, a kosher victim to the God of Hitlerism. Now we begin to see the disaster of Hitlerism.

XIII

In the first Ghetto (or on the Ordonia Street 23)

[126] Everyday, Zlata used to go to work with Feigi and Chanah. The small Sida with two other small children, and Laicia were hiding in their usual place. Before the Action ended, we had a small incident with Motke Hersz Leib's son. The boy refused to sit in the basement until we came back from work. In the morning he used to go to the basement, but after a few hours, he used to leave the basement, or make the people in the basement miserable. There were times when he did not want to stay in the basement at no cost. He used to have breakfast and then hide in the garden. It was not a bad idea to hide in the garden, if one laid on the ground all the time. But in his case, it seemed like he laid on the ground for a short time, but then got up and walked into the field leading toward Kaminke. He did not put on an armband. During the Actions, all the roads were guarded by police. [127] The boy was caught by an Ukrainian policeman who ordered him to sit on the grass for a few hours. The policeman was waiting for his replacement so he could take the boy to the police station. By accident, a Christian woman, who happened to reside on the same street where Hersz Leib had his

apartment, passed by and recognized the boy. The boy asked the woman to inform Mechil about his whereabouts. Fortunately, it was on the woman's way home. She had to pass our place. She told us about the boy, as Mechil, Blank and I were returning from work. We did not have a penny on us, except for Blank. We went to the policeman, and begged him to let the boy go for a few hundred [zloty]. He let the boy go because Mechil and Blank had their apartment on Bilenkewicza Street. Later in the day, the policeman came to our apartment, ad we gave him three hundred zloty and a jacket. He told us that he is not wearing a uniform because he could not witness what was going on. We were lucky to get the boy out so easy from the policemans' hands. Zlata, Feigi, and Chanah returned home after the boy was already home.

Everyday, Zlata walked with her sick feet, in the direction of the area which was designated as the future ghetto in search of an apartment. Jews were paying thousands of zloty for apartments. My dearest sister located such an apartment. The landlord lived already in the city [an indication that the apartment, and the ghetto was located on the edge of the town]. Zlata asked the landlord if they could move into the apartment. The house was small, consisting of four apartments, with a dark corridor in the middle, and a small porch. In the first apartment, as you entered the house, on the right side of the corridor, resided a man named Pasternak. The apartment consisted of a small room and a kitchen. In the corner of the kitchen stood a bread stove. The room had a framed window [not usual for a clay building]. The building was made out of clay, but my sister did not care. After what happened, she did not want another apartment. When I went to see the apartment, I was shocked. [128] Mechil shouted: "a living grave" [referring to the apartment].

However, Zlata did not want to hear about another place. She wanted that apartment, without any partners. Mechil's searches for another place did not help. The truth was that Mechil could not find an apartment. At that time an apartment was going for 5000 zloty and more. You can imagine [our surprise] when the landlady took from us 100 zloty. When the landlady came and saw the way we fixed the broken apartment, she just enjoyed it. The repaired the wall with bricks. I brought from Krajewski a window with a frame. The window with the frame measured 70 by 70 cm. We put the window into the wall and patched up the wall around. We used any building materials we could find: some bricks and sand. We even found some clay in a ditch. Mechil was a construction worker, and I a carpenter. Without a delay, we decided to built a hideout. I brought from Krajewski a few wooden planks, and two large plywood boards. We built a double wall with a narrow space between the walls because the whole apartment was very small. The width of the space between the walls was 60 cm. [about 2/3 of a yard]. We built a foundation type ditch along the fake wall, below the floor level. From previous Actions, we learned that the bandits used to run into the apartments [occupied by Jews], and many a times shoot into the wall [with the intention of killing any Jews hiding in the area between a fake and real wall]. Our hideout was located directly opposite the entry door, the only free wall in the apartment. The other walls had obstructions in it: one had the window, the other a door, and the third one had an oven. We figured out that its safer to sit in the ditch than stand in the hideout. Along the wall of the hideout, in the corner, stood a bed. Under the bed we built a small trap door. In order to get into the hideout, one had to crawl on his belly under the bed, and slide through the small trap door, feet first.

The idea [of sliding backwards] was that the person going into the hideout would land inside standing up. The last person in the hideout closed the trap door from the inside. The bed [covering the trap door] was always made. Once the plywood wall was in place, we covered it with clay, spreading it with our hands. The clay dried up very quickly. It was hard to see the difference between the freshly made wall and the other walls in the apartment. Then we painted the whole apartment two times. At this time we did not have wood, coal, flour nor potatoes. We took the white closet, and the remaining bottom part of the credenza. The other part of the credenza was already used for firewood. Chanah gave us an iron be, and we had our own small table. [129] We also had a coach which we barely fitted into the apartment. The closet did not fit through the door, but we brought it in through the broken window before we fixed it. When we moved out the apartment, we had to leave the closet behind. We could not move it out. We put the credenza near the oven, the bed next to the double wall, the closet in the corner, near the window, and the coach under the window where it fitted perfectly between the bed and the closet. The entire apartment was all furnished. We moved the table near the closet. When the small floor area was washed, the whole room smelled very nice. Oh how my sister was asking God if she could live through [all these horrors] in this small apartment. The Szwarc firm had so much work that the factory was working in shifts. The factory was working day and night. Zlata stopped going to work. She realized that by working, she was not helping herself. The children would go around hungry and dirty. She was right about it. I was going to work. The workplace was near my house. Everyday I brought home wood and wood shavings. Mechil used to bring home meat. He used to buy meat from the Christian or Jewish workers, wrap it

around his body and in this manner carry it out of the slaughter-house. We always had extra meat to sell. As a result, the meat our family consumed did not cost us any money. As a matter of fact, we always made a few zloty profit. Once again I began to deal in flour. I had a Christian friend, Szwiferski, who worked in a flour mill. I was buying from him small quantities of flour. The most difficult part of dealing with four was how to get it home. We did it in the following way: we put eight to ten kg. of flour into a strong sack, then patted the sack until it was flat, and wrapped it around the belly. To make sure that the sack would not move, I secured it tightly in place with a belt. So as not to make my sudden gain of wait too obvious on the way home, I put on a trench coat. Also Zlata traded a few times. I was buying for my boss a bottle of liquor every week and did not go to work. I had other traders who were buying from me flour and meat. At times, while trading, I used to come across some butter. At times, the Christian also had deer meat, and barley. I became his permanent customer. [130] Zlata arranged the purchase of four cubic meters of potatoes from the area near the highway [mentioned earlier, the highway leading out of town]. At this point, the Jews could still walk alone in the streets. We put the potatoes in the ditch between the fake and regular wall. Mechil went also to the train station to get potatoes, and brought home over two cubic meters of selected potatoes. We were well supplied with foodstuff. What I did not have was money. However, I made money trading, over 2000 zloty. One could live, but we were not permitted. At that time my father sent us an additional $ 160. The rest of our fortune my father hid underground, beneath the place where we used to hide liquor. Dear brother, you definitely know where the place is located. You remember the time when a milk can was put down to mark

the place, and in the can was the entire fortune. This time, dear father put everything in the same place but not on top. If someone will search in the place, he will find it. But only you know the place. Maybe Henia remembers the place where we used to hide liquor for a needy day. I used the ladder to get there.

The situation was getting worse by the day. My landlord was washing clothes today in preparation for a move. I don't know what I would do. However, God could help. Peasants continue to go with wagons full of household stuff, cattle and horse to the train station. The worst of all this was that during that time I could not show my face in the street, otherwise I would be looking for another place where to reside. I don't have any money. All I owe is 10 single dollars, and 150 zloty. This is not considered money. However, as I mentioned earlier, God could help. We strolled around the Ordonia street. Thanks to God we did not miss food nor pennies. Sida and Motek were living with us. We used to sent Hersz-Leib to eat in camp. At the beginning, Chanah and Feigi could not manage hustling for food. However, Zlata took them along a few times, and they learned how to make some money. They used to sell their goods in the Szwarc factory. They also walked the street looking for a trade. They always made a profit, two loafs of bread and a few dkg. butter, enough to sent the father a loaf of bread. At the time, I reminded myself of the period when I was stingy in giving the children a cookie. But things changed. At this particular time, I had all kinds of flour. I ordered bread and rolls to be baked. [131] We had a first class bread, so much so, that Zlata opened her eyes in amazement. We wanted to make our friends happy so we let them bake and cook food together with us. Friday afternoon, Zlata used to wash up and dress the children, and, later on, light the Shabbat

candles. When Mechil came home, he used to wash up, pray, and make kiddush. We had Chala for Shabbat, and meat everyday. On many occasions, Mechil used to bring home over 20 kg. of meat. We even had fat from beef so we were never short of fat. The profit from selling meat was very good. Mechil used to take me to his Christians, and occasionally, I get from them meat. We used to wear special pants and jackets for carrying meat in it, and a coat over it so we would not get bloody on the outside. I always carried with me a carpanter's saw and eyeglasses. Most of the time, I walked the street at dawn, twice, back and forth, before people went to work, looking for a trade. Things went well up to the time when we received news from Kaminke - a frightful Action was taking place there. We stopped running in search of business. I can't describe to you what we lived through during this period. Everyday we sent a few telegrams to Kaminke, but we received no reply until the eve of Yom Kipur when a telegram came. The telegram had one word, in Polish: "We are alive". Once again we began to breath freely. But did we enjoy long the good news? Tuesday, the second of May [...; a break in thought]. I could not bring together my thoughts. My heart was under terrible stress. People continue to leave. It seemed like my landlords would also have to leave their apartment. It's Wednesday. I can't write at all. On Monday, on Zkliniec street, a Jewish family was executed. It all happened in the Reklinica courtyard. Most probably, the Jew was hiding in the home of a Polak. But because the Polaks had to leave their homes, the Jew was forced to leave his hideout. He was hiding out with his wife and two children. Someone noticed the Jew in the forest and notified the Ukrainians who came out and killed all four members of the family. [132] Just consider the fact that the family was hiding out for almost three years, and

now, in this decisive period, he and the sheep were murdered. I have no plans. I don't know what to do with myself. I can't show my face outside because everybody knows me. If they would not know me, I could have sneaked over to another place. Also if I would have had a plan, I would cover my face with a kerchief so no one would recognize me. What should I do. My heart is light [in feeling], but I can't sit or lie still in my foolishness. Again someone came to my landlady and told her that they would come here to Jagonie, and search for weapons. My landlady became very scared. She was afraid maybe someone found out about me living there. She was right. Where I lived, some time earlier I dug a opening. The landlady used the opening for hiding a trunk full of clothes. But recently, she removed the trunk from the hole. However, I did not let her close the hole. We covered it with planks, and on top of it, put some dirt. From my attic there was an entry to the place where the opening was located. Today, I asked them if I could hide in the opening, and they should cover me with the planks and earth but they refused. They insisted that I remain outside, in the attic. And when I am caught, I should say that I sneaked into the attic on my own. In the second place, the landlord, Josef Sztreker, went to the village to find out why the gendarme were coming. He went in the morning, about 7 AM and by 5 PM, he was still not back. Most probably, he had an opportunity to get drunk so there he was sitting and drinking.

I can't write anymore. God should help me. Today is Thursday. For the past 10 months I have been fasting every Thursday. The next meal after Wednesday I have Thursday evening, and many times on Friday morning, nine or ten in the morning. All this is silly. My brain are drying up from thinking. [133] I don't know what tomorrow

will bring. Yesterday a Christian woman moved into the apartment of the landlord. She was to remain in the apartment after the rightful owner will leave the apartment. I know the woman. She does not have a husband. Her husband, Szczor, was from Malechiw near Lemberg. He was an Ukrainian. The German arrested him because during the Russian occupation he was an influential man. Most likely by now he is not alive anymore. She had with her a small son, about 13-14 years old, and an eighteen years old daughter, as well as her older daughter's child. The daughter married a Russian and went with her husband to Russia, leaving behind, with her mother, a three or four months old baby. At the time when the mother moved into our landlady's apartment, the child was already over three years old. It's possible that I could impress her with money but at the moment I did not have any money. I thought if it's possible to sneak over to my home and take out the hidden money. However to do this, I would have to endanger my life because at the time an Ukrainian was living in our home, and I had no legal right to enter the home. Again I thought about getting over to the apartment, but what about work. There were no jobs to be found. And here the situation became even more bitter. Our Jagonie Folk-Deutch [German sympathizers] had to leave the area by the 12th of this month, meaning from tomorrow in eight days. God can help. It's possible that if the Christian woman remains in the apartment she would keep me. It possible that there would be another man with a wife with whom I would have to live together. The man's name was Maramasz, a devout Ukrainian patriot. There is no doubt in my mind that he would hand me over to the police at a wink of an eye. In the second place, I would not stay with him. Mrs. Szczorowa had an elder son who served as a volunteer for the Ukrainian SS. This is how it was: the Germans murdered his father because he was

loyal to the Soviets, and the son served the same Germans who were fighting the Soviets. A Jew could not do such things. A Jew always remains a Jew. On many occasions I found myself in very difficult situations but God helped me. At present, my situation was very difficult, but God can help me. [134] On a holiday there was a new terrible Action in Kaminke. Once again, we walked around depressed, and worried. But once again our parents lived through the storm. Then came the time when the kaminke Jews were freed. On that particular day, the Germans came to the representative of the Jewish organization [Judenrat], Friedman from Brisk, and informed him that the entire Jewish population of the town had to resettle to Radechow. The entire ghetto was surrounded with SS men and police. All the Jews were brought to the sport field from where they were all taken to the concentration camp of Belzec. On this particular day, my present landlord saw my dearest parents, both my father and mother, standing in the street with small packages in hands. This, my friends, They perished in the most awful manner with packages in their hands. My dearest mother, how many nights she did not sleep? how many cubic meters of flour she kneaded with her ailing hands so now she could be torn away from the stream of life while carrying packages in her hands. This can't be forgiven. Their murderer must get their punishment. She had to be stronger. No trace should remain of the Germans as nothing remained of us, the Jews.

death of parents

XIV

New Actions in Lemberg

[134] I want to hurry up with my writing. If I'll survive this ordeal, I would like to tell you about my experiences in greater

details and take my time in telling you about it. However, at present, I want to provide you only with an overview of what has happened one night in 1942. It was 11 or 12 o'clock at night when a man knocked on the only window we had in the apartment. We responded to the knock immediately. Mechil went outside the apartment because we recognized the person who was knocking. It was Mechil's brother Yosel. During the months of September and December Yosel was already in a forced labor camp. A few days ago he became ill. He had spotted typhus. It was his Chanah who for a given sum of money got him out of the camp, otherwise he would have been shot. On this particular night, Dr. Jakob Chaim brought Yosel over to our window where he left him and continued on his way. They found out that in the place where Yosel was staying, an Action was about to take place, and the place had no hideout. So the doctor, who was Yosel's friend, brought him to us. For the past few days we were informed that tomorrow another horrible Action would take place. The moment Yosel entered the apartment with Mechil, he fell on the bed. He had over 40 [= 103 F] temperature. We put him on our bed and gave him some milk to feel better. At dawn, we began to get ready to hide on moments notice. The most difficult problem was with Yosel. He was sick and weak, and to top it of, had to stay with children with such a contagious disease. But who had time to think about such things at a time like this. At the moment, the main thing on our mind was to hide ourselves. We had the double wall hideout. After putting a light into it, we pulled Yosel inside the space. He, more than any other person, had to hide. He was a fugitive from the camp. Zlata followed with the two children, Motek, Sima, Eti-Gitale with her only remaining son, Herc, Mechil, Wilek, Klara's husband - Klara and her child were already gone - our neighbor's son Pasternak, an I. There

were also two other neighbors living in the remaining apartments in the house: Feider, a man from the other side of the highway, with his wife who came from the Lampert family, his daughter with her husband, Szwajder, Szwajder's sister with her husband, a man named Preger who was a butcher, Preger sister's two children - a boy and a girl, both between 15 and 17 years old. Their parents and other siblings were taken away in the September Action. [136] The Pregers owned the two other apartments in the building. They took in the other families hoping that they would survive. They built a hideout underneath the floor, covered by a table. The hideout was a hole in the floor into which one had to crawl in order to hide. We were afraid that the people in hiding, once they were caught, would disclose the location of our hideout. There were many cases of such occurrences. On order to assure our safety, we tried to get two of their people into our hideout. However, they could not take the heat inside the cramp space of our hideout. In addition, the neighbor were afraid of the sick person in our hideout. I was the last the person to enter the hideout. In the meantime, I closed the trap to the hideout by pulling over it a sack of old clothes. The trap door was under the bed. We were all inside the hideout. Mr. Pasternak closed the door to our apartment from the outside, while he, in my opinion, was hiding out in a baking oven located in the hallway. Pasternak's father remained in the apartment which his son locked from the outside. The father cut of his gray beard which made him look even worse than with one. The Action which took place at the time was horrible. Homes were put on fire with Jewish residents in them. This was the first time it happened. The area around our home was surrounded by Ukrainian police. Every so often I crawled out of the hideout and looked outside the window. I wanted to see what was

happening outside in the street, if what I saw could be called a street - the stretch from the Peltow bridge to the unfinished part. In the second place, I had to dispose of the night pot used by Yosel. In this manner, we remained hidden in the hideout for two days. We began to run short of water. On the second day, in the evening, Chanah knocked on our door. I told her through the door where the key to the apartment was hidden. She informed us about what was happening in the ghetto. The situation was horrendous - shooting, burning, beatings, murder of old and young, children, and mothers. During this period Chanah worked in the Szwarc firm, and resided in a firm's building This meant that she did not live in her apartment, when the doctor brought Yosel to our apartment. By chance, while running to Yosel, she found out that he was in our place. [137] She brought us a jar of water. After we put Yosel to sleep, we all crawled out of the hideout, ready to return on a moments notice. Shortly afterwards, Zlata and the children returned to the hideout. They were sitting all night long on the potatoes, in the man-made ditch. When Chanah left our apartment, we asked her to close the apartment from the outside. The second day of the Action, the Germans forced their way into Pasternak's apartment, and took away his father. The Germans entered also Lempert's apartment but found no one. On the third day, the Action ended. However, at this point, Yosel remained with us. Chanah came to see him everyday after work. For the next few weeks Yosel remained in bed. He continued to stay in bed until such time when he could get up and walk around. I must note here that before we could move into Ordona Street apartment, I had to get a permit from the dwelling organization. During this period, Zlata was still going to work for the Szwarc firm, and the permit office was not too far from my place of work. I

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went to the office everyday. There were thousands of people who were trying to get a permit for an apartment. One day, SS men arrived at the office. On that particular day, I happened to be standing in line, waiting. The SS men opened fire at the crowd. A young, Jewish boy, passing by on a horse drawn wagon, carrying wood, was shot. Many other people were shot as well. Then the SS men proceeded to the housing office, caught many Jewish policemen, and hung them. They hung a Jew on each of the balcony's of the building. I don't remember how many Jews were hung at the time. In any case, I believe about thirteen policemen, including the president of Jewish community. My sister was aware that I went to the housing office, so when she heard about what happened, she was extremely worried. After the second action, all the residents in the building decided to build a hideout for the entire building. Everybody in the building, chipped some money, we bought wooden planks from Krajewsi [138], and under my direction, we began the construction of the hideout. I asked Pasternak with his son and sister to leave their apartment, so I could remove the floor planks in the apartment. Every plank was marked so it would be put back in the same order later on. Once the planks were removed, the dirt from underneath was carried outside in pales. We worked only during the night because we did not wanted anybody to know what was going on. During the day, we kept the apartment closed. The worst problems confronting us was the large amount of dirt we had to dispose of in our courtyard. Once the dirt was removed, I put down a wooden floor. To prevent the wooden floor to make an echo, I covered it with over a half meter of dirt. Only at this point, we put back the original floor. The entrance to the hideout was placed in our apartment, next to the oven. The top of the trap door was covered with a tin plate as in case of other

hanging of the Judenrat

apartments. The tin plate was supposed to prevent a possible fire from burning coals falling out of the oven. From the trap door, a narrow tunnel led to the edge of the main hideout. Here, we built a ladder leading down to the hideout under Pasternak's apartment. We built another chimney [a fake one] to the outside to ventilate the area. We obviously had to hide it so no one would see it. In the hideout, in the corner, we put a special, closed tin container full of water. In the adjoining hideout area, we had another tin container. The walls of the hideout were lined with benches which could hold about 15 or 16 persons, which in essence allowed 15 persons to hide out. It was an exceptionally good hideout.

The day we finished the hideout, very early in the morning, there was a camp Action. We decided to try out the hideout. We barely had enough time to get into the hideout. What was most important, Yosel could hide. Guards from the camp were coming, and they could and would shout him on the spot. Zlata ran over [139] to the door, and did not let them into the feather hut until everybody entered the hideout. She was screaming through the door that she was looking for the door to the apartment. I don't remember how many Actions and problems we lived through. It's hard to remember. One thing I must tell you: "Another week passed by and absolutely nothing has changed". I hope from day to day, week to week, month to month that something would change. I can honestly say that in the last three years i have not seen any change. And my situation is so close, yet so far. God should help me.

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XV

My horrendous experiences in the hideout

[139] The night was lit up with fires burning in the surrounding area of Jagonia. As usual, the Ukrainians put many homes to fire a fact which influenced our landlords to leave the present location. Had it not been for the fires and murders, the local population would remain in place. They knew that once they leave this place, they would not have it so good at any other place as they had here. I reminded myself of how we lived a year or two earlier, how happy we were at the time to have a piece of bread, and how they [the Christian] live at the present - much better than the Jews at the good times. They drink and eat everything the best, and everyday they get drunk. They learned how to make alcohol, and they constantly make booze, or as they say in English moonshine.

It is Friday. The time is definitely seven in the morning. I began writing because I want to tell some more about experiences. Yesterday, the landlord told me that on Monday an SS man will come and gather all the landlords of Jagodna, and inform them how the evacuation and transport would look like. I asked the landlord if the whole thing could be delayed for another four or five days. Hopefully the Russians would begin a new offensive, or maybe the long awaited second front [Western front] would open. The local population would rather see the Russians enter our town, than have to leave their apartments and everything in it. However, the matter is not in their hands. [140] God should help us.

One day, when the workers reached the gate to the factory, they were stopped by a large number of SS men. Part of the workers had already received their new ER. and Vo. identification cards. It was understood that all the workers would receive such cards. In the meantime, when the worker came out to work very early in the morning, all the workers who had no identification cards were ordered to stand to one side. The approaching column of marching workers was not aware what was happening in front of them, at the gate. By the time the workers found out that all people without the Vo and Er cards were taken aside, over 1500 men and women were already detained and guarded by Ukrainian police and SS men. Some of the workers had explosives on them, and were ready to blow up the park near the place. Many people were shot on the spot. The entire ghetto was in an uproar. People were hiding in every possible nook and cranny. At that time, Mechil was working in the slaughterhouse, and I in Krajewski's workshop. Both of us did not get a V. card. All of Mechil's friends who were working in the slaughterhouse and came out to work that morning were taken to the camp. The evening before the incident, Mechil, acting on a premonition, sent me to his friend Blank, and asked him to get for him a V. card for a hundred zloty. The workers in the slaughterhouse collected money so they could get V. cards through payment of a large collective bribe.

My firm, once again, did not give any Jew a V. card, and handed over the Jews to the police. The stronger workers were taken to camp, and the weaker ones were led away. As a result, both I and Mechil became unemployed the same day, and could not show our faces in the street. While part of the SS group was conducting an Action near the gate to the factory, the main force, including the headquarters, and assisted by the Jewish police, was conducting a

dreadful Action in the ghetto. We all entered our hideout, and nothing happened to us. Soon afterwards appeared all kinds of refugees from Kaminke who managed to escape from the last Action in the Kaminke ghetto. Thee were: 1) Dowke Miszel, 2) Lola Miszel, 3) Lipa Kobl, 4) Sznena's daughter, 5) Abraham Federbairsz, sosi the baker's son-in-law, 6) Eksztein's, the wheat merchant, daughter, 7 & 8) both sisters Chari, the ones who were staying with Fromer. Some Jews managed to escaped and were hiding in Bisk. [141] Mosze Haleman with both of his children, Deiza and Roza, his brother-in-law. Dr. Oister Mosze Tenenbaum, nicknamed Columbus, together with his wife and two children, were staying in Lemberg. Josel Zeigner, the barber, with his wife, a boy and a girl, were taken earlier in Kaminke when the town was made "Juden-Frei" [(in German) = free of Jews], and all the Jews were murdered. During this time, the SS men left behind 11 Jews, five men and six women to clean up the ghetto. The men were: 1) Leizer Zoizner, Bailachil's younger son, 2) Hersz Zeizner, my friend Hersz the baker, 3) Itshak Kahl, my friend Abramcze Kahls, 4) Perec Szeindale, the one who was together with Henia's brother in gymnasia [=school], in the fifth grade. I believe he was the shochat's [religious slaughterer] son. Then there were, if I remember correctly: 1. Zlati - Abes, 2. Oike the shoemaker's wife, 3) Itsiale, Indik's, the baker's daughter. The other three people I don't remember. One nice day, three people fled from kaminke: both Zoizners, and Itsie Kahl. They had on them a nice fortune [money] which they gathered in the ghetto. Realizing that the Germans would not keep them alive after the ghetto was cleaned up, they escaped and came to Lemberg. They found for themselves an apartment, and began to search for a way to get through to Hungary or Rumania. I met them. In a matter of days, another horrendous

Action broke out. Every home which was suspected of hiding Jews, was put on fire with fire bombs. The home burned down with people in them. The German bandits were waiting outside the burning homes, and everytime Jews were running out in an attempt to save themselves, the Germans shot them with machine-guns. I, Mechil, and Wilek, Klara's husband, managed to secure new identity cards since the Vo. action. Juzek Reiter got us the id. cards. Juzek was a Bo [an organization not familiar to me] representative in Lemberg, and worked for a German firm. It cost us 500 zloty an identity card. We had to get fake id. cards because the firm where Juzek was employed received only 150 Vo card and distributed them all. Once again we continued to work for Reiter, in a German firm. The name of the German firm where we were working was named Geber and Wolf. Over 160 Jewish men and women worked in it. Our job consisted of taking rocks or sand to the concrete factory. Everyday, we had to get up very early in the morning, and the whole colony marched in a group to the main gate. On the other side of the gate waited a few firm truck which took us to the factory. We had to work everyday of the week including Sunday. There were a few instances where Jews were handed over to the SS men because they failed to come to work a few days in a row. One man missed one day of work and he was also taken away. None of these people were ever seen again. In the firm worked also people from the camp. The people from camp were weak, and swollen from hunger and cold. The German overseers in our area killed a few Jews from the camp. Unfortunately, they could not work as hard as the better rested people from the ghetto who ate better, and did not have the SS men in front of their eyes all day long. One nice November or December night we found out that an Action was to take place the following day. At the same time, a bit later on, Dowke

Miszel arrived. He was brought to us by his youngest sister Lali. He had typhus. Under the German occupation, and especially in the camp, people walked around with 40 degree [Celsius] fever. Soon afterwards, Hersz and Laizer Koizner and Itsie Kohl arrived. They abandoned their apartment because it was too small too hide in, and came to us. To Pasternak came a Mrs. Rozenfeld, her husband was in the Russian army, and her single sister. At one point they all lived together with Pasternak on Krul Street.

In the hideout we had prepared water, and we had light. We also bought two battery flashlights. At dawn we went down to the hideout.

It's Friday, late in the afternoon. It's seven PM. The folkdeutchen [= German sympathizers] received notice to leave their domiciles on the 12th of the month, meaning from today in eight days. As I have stated a few times in the past, God can help, the same God who help me so far. A good Shabbat.

Sunday. The time was definitely nine in the morning. In no way can I see my landlord. [143] The last time I saw him was on Friday. I would like he should take care of something for me when he goes to town. In the meantime I did not see him. He was not home for the entire night. In the meantime, last evening, a soldier with two horses came to stay in the house. In the past, it was possible for me to sneak in the evening into the apartment, and find out something about the situation, but now with the German in the apartment, this also became impossible. I have all kind of ideas, but I don't know if this time I will succeed to evade the hands of the murderers. In the meantime I have no money, and without any money you can't do anything. I have a plan to sneak into our apartment, get to the place where our fortune was supposed to have been hidden, and take it out. I am not sure I will do it, but if I

do, I will deposit in the place a marker. It would be a good idea to put in the place a bottle with a note relating to present life experiences. At the time, all these ideas were just thoughts. The time was running fast. There was not much time left till Friday, the 12th of May. The army already managed to take away the two cows. Yesterday, they [landlord] slaughtered a pig and a lamb to have as food for the road, packed and prepared themselves for the journey. I was sure that I would have to leave the place two days before their departure date, because that is when the army or the gendarme will come to take away their household belongings. God should help me. I want to write some more. I don't have where to hide my diary, or a secure place where to leave it.

The hideout could take in 24 persons. I will list them here: Pasternak with his son, and his sister's son, both Rozenfeld sisters, Wilek, Klara's husband, with his brother Hersz Coizner, Leizer Coizner, Yitshak Kahl, Lola. All the neighbors did not want to let Miszel Dowkin into the hideout because he was sick. They were afraid of his illness. So the neighbors gave him a choice, he or his sister Lola could come. He told Lola to go in, and he began to walk away. However, Zlata ran after him, and called him back. She ordered him to hide under the fake wall, so the people could not complain about it because this part of the hideout was not secure. And Zlata was screaming at everybody: "People, you are worse than the Gestapo [German secret police]. You banished a sick person, [144] and you want God to help you, and be saved from danger". Right away Zlata made for the man a package of food and a liter of tea in a bottle, and pushed him into our first hideout. He sat there all alone. My dearest sister, today, when I am in such a terrible danger, I can see what you had done for the other man. You should know that this

Dowke was in our place on more than one occasion. He did not have a groszn [= penny] to his name, and my sister used to always give him to eat. Later on when the three people came from Kaminke and brought with them a fortune, they supported him a bit. Dear God why did you punish my sister?? The others in the hideout were: Sima and Motek, Hersz-Leib's Etie, Gitale Szwaider with his wife and mother-in-law, his sister with her husband, and the orphaned two children, Mechil, Zlata and both of her children, and I. The hideout was made for 15-16 people. It could not take anymore people. The hideout was extremely crowded but what else could be done. We had to make it. All the doors were closed from the outside by Mr. Eti Gitales,who then went to the factory apartment. It was understood that the Germans will only control who is an Vo. and Er. worker. Women and children who were not employed could not stay in those apartments. Mechil and I could also go to our firm's apartment at Damarstinowska Street 17, but obviously, we did not want to leave Zlata and the children alone here. This meant that Jews could not live here anymore but only in the smaller, designated area of the ghetto. In the meantime, the Action began. We were all very quiet in the hideout, listening to what was happening in the street. From time to time, I crawled out of the hideout, and through the covered small window caught a glimpse of what was happening in the street. Armed Ukrainians were standing on the inner and out perimeter of the ghetto, without entering the Jewish homes. Near our home stood Ukrainian police in close proximity to each other. I used to open the trap door to the hideout so some [145] air could enter into the space of the hideout. Outside, everything was covered with snow so no one could detect where we discarded the earth from the hideout. The first day passed by in peace. They came but did not touch any of

the three doors. The second day was horrible. Every so often shots were heard outside. When I crawled out from the hideout, I saw fires burning around us. Jewish homes were on fire. I did not want to create a panic in the hideout so I did not say anything about the fires. The first night all the men crawled out of the hideout, and only women and children remained inside. This was a precautionary measure. If anything was to occur, it would be better if they were already inside, and there was no need to rush to hide. On the second day, it was impossible to open the trap door because the situation in the street was horrifying. They broke into Pasternak's apartment and turned everything upside down. A similar thing happened to Szweider's apartment. The lock was ripped off, and the apartment was sacked. They tried to brake into our apartment but could not open the door. The time was 3 PM in the afternoon, on a December day. Soon afterwards came another group who tried to open the door. They tried in a variety of ways to open the door but were unsuccessful. At one point we heard that they sent someone for an ax, and began to hit the door with an ax. Our door had a strong lock which did not let go like the other ones. During this time, everyone had to be very quiet. Yet, as the 24 persons breathed, the noise was terrible as the chopping outside continued for more than a half an hour. During this time, everybody inside the hideout tried to remain as quiet as possible, so much so that the breathing sounded like from a locomotive. At the end, one man succeeded to rip out the small window together with the bars, and entered the apartment through the gaping hole, while another man succeeded to ax down the lock, and the rest of the gang entered the apartment. They threw everything onto the floor. There was more than 1 kg. of Soviet tea, 3 kg. of Polish perfumed soap, as well as a half a liter of liquor which we

kept especially for situations when it could save our lives. [146] They finished the liquor on the spot, and the tea and soap took with them. In the meantime, the time was moving very slowly, and unfortunately, Laizer Koizner fainted, and fell to the ground. The children were barely holding on, but Zlata made their lot easier by petting them with her hand. Preger's sister's children, a boy and a girl fell to the ground powerless. The same happend to Pasternak. For lack of oxygen, the candle went out. In the meantime, Leizer Zeizner came to himself. In light of the fact that he could not take it anymore, he said: "Let me out. I will buy us out, all of us. I don't want to stay here and choke." However, Mechil and Wile held on to his hand, and covered his mouth. Small Alisz was feeling worse with every minute. They moved him over closer to me thinking that the air near the trap door is better ad it would make him feel better. The air quality in the hideout was getting worse. The boy began to choke. I had to hand him back toward the inside of the hideout so no one from the outside would hear him making noises. I heard the men outside leave. But I was afraid to tell the people in the hideout about it, fearing that they would all rush toward the trap door, so I decided to wait a few seconds. I wanted to make sure that there was no one left in the apartment. Very slowly, I opened the trap door. All at once I smelled smoke in the apartment. I feared that the apartment maybe on fire. Without saying a word, I crawled out of the hideout. I asked Abisz and Elisz [my nephews] to join me, than all the other fainted people joined us. As it happened, the home of our next door neighbor was on fire, and the smoke from the fire was rushing into our apartment through the broken window. The roof of our home was made out of wood, but fortunately, it was covered with a sheet of snow. Everybody became

panicky. Zlata was screaming: "Don't worry. God will help us. Nothing will happen to us." When we noticed the Ukrainian police walking in front of our home, we realized that the Action was still not finished. [147] In the meantime, a home across the street from of us caught on fire. It became dark. A part of the hiding group was still afraid and decided to go over to Dowek where it was much airier. Dowek was alone. Hersz and Leizer Zeizner, and Wilek Preger went to Dowek. We told the women to return to the hideout. Only some went back. Zlata was one of those who refused to go back. She prepared white linen sheets so when it will get dark, we could wrap ourselves in them, and by doing so no one will recognize us. Zlata was always collected, and never lost her cool. This was true during all Actions. She provided strength to others with her hope.

It was getting late. Later on in the evening, Herc came and brought the news that the Action was over. Hurriedly we came out of hiding, boarded the broken window, and then covered it with a shawl and pillow in order to stop the wind from blowing in. It was terribly cold. We went to the other side of the house and saw fires burning all round us. The house where the Rozenfelds were residing was on fire, while the homes of all our other neighbors were already burned to the ground. Szweider who was hiding out with s lost a ten years old son in a fire. It just too hard to enumerate all the terrible experiences we lived through during the period in the Ghetto ad in the hideout. It's impossible to put it all down on paper. There are not enough words to describe it all. Our home remained standing and God had guarded over us.

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XVI

On Wieszbickiego Street - under Jewish arrest, or the trip to the other side of the word and back.

[147] Immediately following the Action, we began to work in the new apartment given to us by the firm Wolfer. The apartments given to the Jewish workers were located at the corner of Domarstinowska Street 17. [148] We, meaning Mechil, Wilek and I, received a small apartment with four other workers. The apartment had no kitchen. Right after we moved in, Mechil made a kitchen. I brought a bread chimney, a large container, and an iron plate. We dragged all the items to our apartment on an spring board from a bed. Before this place we resided on Ordona Street. However, after the last Action, there was no need for such a large ghetto, so our particular section was cut away from the boundaries of the ghetto. All this boiled down to the fact that only Jewish men who were employed, and only the wives who had the firm's approval, could reside in the firm's apartments. The women were considered housewives who were supposed to keep the apartments clean. The moment we moved into the new apartment, we began to search for a place where to construct a hideout. When we arrived, other people were already residing in the building. During the last Action, a locked up basement was discovered. The Germans removed from the basement 120 people [Jews]: wives, children, mothers and fathers. The people in the basement were families of the working men. We were not in a hurry to leave

our apartment on Ordona Street, especially considering the fact that we had there a good hiding place. With the closing of the ghetto, my trading in flour came to an end. Secondly, we [the Jews] could not walk the streets alone, only in groups; later on, we could only walk with a Christian escort. Also Mechil stopped working in the slaughterhouse which meant we also did not have any meat. What we did have was a supply of potatoes, flour, and wheat. We wanted to make sure that the children would not miss anything. We began to build hideouts for acquaintances. friends, and even strangers. We charged all kinds of prices for building the hideouts: 1000 Zloty, 1500 Zloty, 800 Zloty, and 2000 Zloty. We had to provide the building materials. We used bricks and sand from burnt out houses which we brought back with a wheelbarrow. We also had to buy clay. Once we had all the materials, we began to build by digging. The most important element of the hideout was the trap door. We were very inventive with the construction of the trap door making sure that the door would be hard to recognize. We worked hard day and night but we could not complain. We were making good money. We put a lot of sweat and tears into our work. The work was hard but it was worth it. We were constructing the hideouts at night and after work, while during the day we work at our workplace. We made sure nothing was missing in our home. We began building hideouts at a time when we could not get a Vo [id. card] necessary to get work, and when we could not leave the ghetto. We had to buy bread in the ghetto which was a few zloty more than in the Christian part of the town.

[149] We were so well known as hideout builders that people were pulling us from job to job. Anytime we saw that a hideout was not secure, we told the person who hired us even though we were paid irrespectively. There were times that we built the hideout only

after the people changed their apartment for a safer one. Secondly, people sought a hideout builder they could trust. I should note here that from working so much in the construction of hideouts, we became specialists. None of the hideouts we constructed were uncovered, or people were taken out from them. Zlata continued to live on Ordona Street, while we went to work from the firm apartment. At the gate to the firm grounds, at dawn, Gestapo men was checking every passer by. I, Mechil, and another person were the last in the column of over 120 marching people. As I passed the Gestapo man, I did not know what was happening in front of me. The German's name was Ciler. Later on, I used to see him in the Janow camp. I was the only person from our group whom he stopped, and checked my Vo [id. card] using a flashlight. I had a fake Vo [card]. The German handed me over to the Sando [Jewish] police. A bit later on, sixty eight men and women were moved to the Jewish prison on Wezbicki Street within the confines of the ghetto. The prison was full with over 400 people, young, old, women, teenage girls, children and small babies. One day, the SS men arrived and surrounded the prison, [150] and began to load the people unto trucks. Some people threw themselves to the floor. They were shot on the spot. I kept pushing myself into a corner. Six trucks full of people were already taken away. Enough people remained behind for yet another truck. They began to load us into the last truck. When 12 people were already on the truck, a truck full of people, taken away earlier, were brought back to the prison. The murderers on the truck said something to the Germans in prison, and then the people were driven back into the prison, beaten over the heads or faces with riding whips. We found out from the people on the truck which just returned that they were taken to the sands [place where people were shot and buried in mass graves].

However, they were brought back because there were no more graves left. All graves were filled with murdered people. Dozens of people who did not fit into the graves, were lying on the edges of the mass graves. And so in this manner I survived another terrible ordeal. Only later, we found out that the camp inmates could not dig up all the required graves because the ground was frozen. After this incident, I remained in prison for another two nights and a day. The second day, there was another Action in the ghetto. The police executed a home search, and any Jew caught in an apartment was brought to the prison. In a few hours, the cells were full again. Two cells had a few persons with typhus. The ill were lying down burning with fever, and lice crawling all over them. Every so often, another sick person passed away. Can you imagine what my sister was going through when she found out that I was taken out from the marching column, and the Germans were cleaning up Wiezbicki Street of Jews, and taking other Jews from the prison to the sands. The prison was filled to the brink with Jews. There was no room where to stand, and people were pushing against each other. Hurriedly, I informed Mechil and Zlata that I am alive. They, meaning Zlata and Mechil, ran to all our acquaintances asking if somebody could help me but to no avail. [151] To make matters worse, I had on me about $ 300. Mechil came to the prison window and saw me. I had on me also 160 from the money which I threw out the window in the direction where Michel was standing. I left some money on me, over $ 100, hoping that I could strike a deal with the Jewish police. I was hoping that they would let me go for a $ 50 bill. During this period, the commander, untershtorm furer Wildus, and a few assistants from the Janower camp came to our prison. The two assistants, as I found out later, were named Bitner and Webke. They

began a selection process. Every Jew was evaluated, meaning he was asked about his occupation. I said that I am a carpenter. The camp commander did not understand me, so the Jewish police replied in my place. I was told to move to the side. Webke instructed the weaker persons to follow him. Later on, I found out that Webke was an exert in exterminating Jews. He was like the death sentence. From about two hundred persons, he selected about sixty two healthy and strong men. Soon afterwards, a armed escort arrived from the camp. They lined us up on Wierzbicki Street, and Wildus asked everyone if he had good shoes and coat. A few men replied that they don't have good shoes. Wildus took the men back to the prison building, and told the Jews inside to give up their shoes and coats. He explained that the men inside the prison will not need them anymore, while the selected men do. Then we were lined up five abreast and led away to the bathhouse on Balonowa Street. We were all frisked in the bathhouse. Money or watches were taken away. The guard took away also good gloves, as far as a good coats or boots were concerned, the Germans exchanged them for their own, which by the way left a lot to be desired. After the bath, we were once again lined five abreast, and led away to the camp. We were told to watch each other very carefully and to make sure that no one should escape [152] because if someone does escape, ten persons would be shot as punishment. Around 8 PM, I found myself in camp. Until that time, I only heard about the camp, now I actually saw it with my own two eyes. I don't want to describe it because now is not the time for it. I am writing now about what I should do next. I must be made from steel to survive through all these events. It's extremely hard to survive. I hope God will help me.

XVII

In camp and Raker's place

[152] We were brought to the camp, to the reception office. Everybody was registered, and had to sign the registration form. From that moment onward, my name was not Mordche Taksel (because on my jobs, I signed my name as Taksel, not Sztromer. The name was very useful to me.) I received a number and a yellow patch which I had to sew onto my card. **I became number 36-382.** For the first two days we were kept together in a barrack, and then we were divided into various groups, I became a room attendant, and remained working in camp. It was not that the work was too hard, but the fact that we had to stay in camp the entire day was dangerous. Every so often, a drunk SS man would beat or shoot at the worker. All day long, the camp commandant used to shoot down from his window at the passing by workers, aiming at the heads, more precisely at the eyes, using his automatic weapon. People were shot here all the time. 50-60 camp workers were taken with trucks to load and unload trains full of wood, bricks, and cement. The remainder of the workers worked in town. They could stash away many supplies [153], they could make some money, purchase a bread, while the people in camp had to go without. I was lucky to work with a group of only Christians. In the group there was only one other Jew, as a result our group was not tortured by the Germans. Everyday there were dead, sometimes one and at other times more because of the daily camp wake up calls at 3 or 4 AM at night. After the wake up call, groups of bandits used to come out and brutalized the entire population of about a few thousands of people. This went on till daybreak. Some bandits ran through the crowd, beating and shooting as they passed by. I want to

shorten my description of these events because it's too much for me to suffer. After this ordeal, the few thousands of Jews had to march through the gate where a group of SS men was standing. Every group leader had to report what group it was, and how many people were in his group. Only then, the group leader received from the guardhouse, which served also as an office, a permit to enter the firm. At this point, every entering worker was carefully checked. Any person who was not to their liking was taken out of the five person abreast marching column, and ordered to stand next to the wire fence awaiting execution. The person was shot on the spot, or the Germans waited until the column passed by, and then shot the whole group of people. The following routine took place everyday. At times the routine was spiced up - the column of five persons walking abreast had to run across the gate. Whoever could not manage to run, was stopped, moved aside, and, later on, shot. There were sick people who called upon their last ounce of strength just to march straight the short distance across the gate. However, when the people were ordered to run, it became immediately apparent who could muster the last ounce of strength, and who had none left. [154] Some people walked around with 40 degree Celsius temperature because [fearing for their life] they could not remain in the barracks. Anytime someone was missing at the gate, a guard was sent to the barracks to shoot him. To report sick was to signs ones death sentence. A sick person was shot on the spot. Every group of inmates provided had its hospital. Each group had its own doctor. There were enough doctors, lawyers, and engineers in the groups. As a matter of fact, there were enough Jewish doctors for each group to have five doctors. I worked in the camp for a weeks, and was forced to sustain myself on the camp's soup, because I gave someone my money to hide it for me.

A few days later, I, Sender Podharec, and Sender Kihos could not locate the man who [hid the money]. Later on, he escaped from his work place into the ghetto. It took me some time to inform Mechil to get back my money. At the end, I lost part of my money. The camp leader, a Jewish lawyer from Lemberg named Akser, was always present at the distribution of work assignment, and without whom nothing was done in camp. I knew Dr. Akses's son. I made an effort to approach the man and asked him if he could save me by sending me to work in town. I just could not manage in camp. I let Zlata know that I was alright, and was not missing anything. I did not want to share with her my problems. She had enough problems of her own. You should know that she barely made it to the new place on Ordona Street. The [Germans] were building the wooden fence, while she was running with her bundles of foodstuff. She was forced to leave behind the fire planks because she just could not carry more than she did. It should be noted here that firewood was a very important item. From every hideout construction job, I used to bring home every scrap of wood so my sister will not miss firewood. The first time I asked Akser for a favor was after working two weeks for the room service. Then I approached him again in the third week. He told me that he remembers. You should know that Akser was not the man he was at the time [in camp]. He could make a favor, and he always helped the unfortunate Jews, and saved them. [155] A few days passed by, and he assigned me to another work in town. As faith would have it, the work group, to which I was assigned, consisted of men who were with me in prison. As it happened, the men from the prison were brought to camp, and out of the group, 15 men were sent to work in town. Among them was also the work representative, a friend of mine from the Jewish arrest, a man named Ralf. For a period of a few weeks,

while I was working for the room service people in camp, the group from prison worked for a firm in town. Later on, the firm where the arrested friend were employed, did not need anymore workers. Fortunately, another firm requested 20 workers. Akser took the original group and four other men, among them me, and sent us all to work in town. When we reached the firm's gate the workforce leader informed the gate guard tat 0 men reported to work. We were all given a piece of paper and an SS man standing at the gate told us: "Don't run away because for every person who escapes I will shoot 5 others from the group." This was not an empty threat. They [the Germans] were capable of shooting 10 men for one escapee. I had the chance of seeing it on more than one occasion. Furthermore, the SS man told us: "Make sure that they are satisfied with your work because you are going to work for the army." Then he ordered us to move to the side and wait. Wait and wait until a soldier would come and take us away. Soon a truck came. We were told to get on the truck, and were taken to the Czerniowce train station and nearby where all the merchandise was arriving. One from our group happened to work for the firm earlier when he had a Vo id. card. He was caught at the gate the same day I was, and was arrested even though his Vo. card was real. In prison, he was informed that his Vo card was a fake. So then, when the soldier told us that we were going to the [155] firm where the man was previously employed, out of joy, he began to dance on the truck, hugging and kissing everybody. You can imagine, he worked for the firm for a long time, and was doing very well while employed in the firm. Once we arrived at the train station, we were taken to carry boxes of coal, unloaded in a pile near the station, to the coal warehouse. Once I left the camp, I found myself in the street, and worked. I was lucky, I saw human

beings around me. I stopped being cautious because I found myself in a different world. The first day, we received food from the military kitchen. The food was quite different from the one in the camp. In camp, the meal consisted of not peeled potatoes and water. The cooks used the meat and flour for their own needs. The military firm where we were working was named "the First Aid Station for the Wounded". For the most part, our job was as follows: during the siege of Stalingrad, when the trains came from the front, loaded with wounded, the Red Cross unloaded the wounded, and we did the rest. We removed the linen spreads covering the straw, the ovens, and blankets which we folded. The blankets and linen spreads were taken with a truck to the assembly warehouse. At work, we did not miss bread or butter. Under the straw spreads, we found full and half full sardine cans, full and half breads. In addition, we used to purchase from the Red Cross soldiers, cans of sardines, bread, salami, and anything else they had to sell. We used to take back to camp sacks full of stuff and sell it. In addition, we used to find socks, watches, a pocket knife, a straight razor. We ate bread and butter. I found Sancio Grinberg who worked in the ghetto. Everyday, he took to Zlata bread, cans of sardines, butter, and every once in a while even chocolate for the children. Everyone was amazed how it happened that everyone was sending packages from ghetto to camp, while I was sending such packages from camp to the ghetto. I was happy that I could help my sister and her children. She was not missing any foodstuff. [157] Whenever we found candy, I sent it to [Zlata's] children. We also used to work at loading wounded soldiers into commercial train cars headed for Germany. We outfitted each train car with boxes of firewood and coal. All of us had a prepared song for the soldier: "Maybe you have a piece of bread?" They

responded in varied ways, from giving us a whole loaf of bread, a piece of bread, or nothing at all. We carried a bread bag for the foodstuff we gathered, and over it we wore a sweater or a short fur jacket. We were selling the foodstuff in the ghetto. People like me, who worked in town, did not miss food. Occasionally we took a blanket and sold it for next to nothing, so others could make a living as well. We did not miss any money. For a few days, there were twenty men on our group. Later on, more and more soldiers arrived from the front, and ten more men were added to our group. As it happened, during an Action in Greiding, some men were brought to Lemberg. Ten from that group were assigned to us. However, the first day, four men from that group escaped. We were overcome with a horrific fear. We were afraid that as punishment for the four who escaped we'll be all shot. We walked around in the ghetto, afraid to return to camp. The soldiers became angry and ordered us to get on the truck. They were responsible for us, and had to return us to the camp. We asked not to report in the camp that four men escaped from our group. Upon the return from work, the workers were not counted. The work group leader had a Jewish friend in the office. Only Jews worked there. [158] The friend advised the work group leader what to do. As luck may have it, men were brought from an Action in the ghetto. Listening to the advise, our leader took home with him four men from the newly arrived group, and in the morning we walked through the gate with the four strange men. Once in the ghetto, we let two men go home, a father and his son, and replaced them with two young men, volunteers, from the ghetto who had no one [family], had no place where to hide, and were afraid that if they are caught in an Action, they would be taken directly to the sands. And here they were in the camp, and in a good workplace. There were many

volunteers who were willing to come to the camp; however, at the time the four men escaped, it was too late into the night to walk in the ghetto. The entire period I was working in the camp and for the [German] army, I did not go to the ghetto. During this period, Mechil and Abish became sick with typhus catching it from two persons who lived in the same, cramp apartment. I was very worried about this. I was worried that Zlata may catch the illness. Mechil was taken to the Jewish hospital, while the child remained at home. At this particular time, I could not enter the ghetto. Mechil and the child got better, and Mechil returned home. Two days later there was an Action, and all the people in the hospital were taken to the sands. Anybody found in bed was shot lying in bed. Soon afterwards, my work ended, and 10 men were assigned to Roker's can factory near the highway. Everyday, the trolley came to the camp, and we used to travel into the slaughterhouse, and from there enter the Roker factory. I was like a green man [= greenhorn] who could not do anything on the new job. [159] However, at no time flat, I acclimatized myself. I began buying all kinds of things in the camp and sell them in the factory. Everyday I earned good money. At times over 500 zloty. The items for sale came from Actions. The people who worked in the stores brought them to camp and sold them. One brought a jacket, one a pair of pants, an entire suit, lady dresses, coats. Unfortunately, all items were part of the Jewish fortunes whose owners were already sent to the other world. Working for Roker, every Sunday, I went to the ghetto to see the children. They anxiously counted the days till Sunday. I did not spare anything for them. Every Sunday I used to leave for Zlata 500 zloty. I also used to purchase a few loafs of bread and other items. The entire week, I lived with the hope of seeing them on Sunday. I made

for myself a good suit, shoes, and dressed myself well. I had what to eat in the factory. The cooks were selling all kinds of foodstuff which meant that I could buy good pieces of meat. I used to send Zlata foodstuff with people who worked with Vo. [related to Vo id. cards], and returned daily to the ghetto. I also used to buy and send [to Zlata] meat, butter, and bread. Mechil continued to work for the same firm, so everyday he could leave the ghetto, and bring home also all kind of supplies. However, the fear which Zlata and her children experienced everyday was indescribable. A day did not pass without confusion, fear, and need to hide. The children used to hide in the wooden base of the bunk bed. Mechil built the base to support the bunk bed, and inside the box he constructed a double bottom. Zlata and Elish slept on the lower level, while Mechil and Abish on the upper part of the bunk bed.

Sometimes later, a new bandit named Zimek came to the ghetto. [160] He turned the ghetto upside down. One day, Zimek came into the house where Zlata was living and created a horrifying panic. Small Elish jumped out the window into the street. Unfortunately, as it happened, the street was deserted, and the gate to the next door building where the boy wanted to hide was locked. Elish decided to crawl back into the apartment. They lived on the main floor. He closed the door, and hid in the double bottom box of the bunk bed. At the same time, Zlata and the older boy hid in the basement.

My most beloved ones, I am cutting my story short because I believe that by tomorrow I may have to move out of here. I don't know when and to where, because the landlord is moving out and another is moving in, and the new landlord will want to examine the entire house, including the attic [where I was hiding]. I would like to point out one more time that what the children with their mother

lived through is indescribable. The situation worsened. The Poles were informing on the Jews they were hiding, and the Jews were taken directly to the sands. In the meantime, the firm of Raker provided us with room and board. It was very advantages to us. We did not have to return to the camp and report, and witness all the horrors. We also did not have to go through the camp's gate, and shake from fear as we passed by the SS men. The firm gave a place where to stay on Zbojowska Street. Our rooms were furnished with iron spring beds. Our situation was much better than those in the ghetto. We could go to sleep whenever we wished. It was Springtime and we were getting up very early. A few of us, friends, used to go to work and from work earlier or later so as not to be together with the rest of the group. Our group consisted of 32 men and a doctor. My days of trading came to an end because we stopped going to camp. However, it was all worth it as long as we did not have to see the faces of the SS men in the camp. [161] Everyday, we were joined by 20 men from the camp. Some of them brought all kinds of items for sale, and I used to stick around them because I had connections in the factory. From time to time a truck came from Kaminke to pick up marmalade. At time like this, I made sure that they should not recognize me. The work in Raker firm was not easy. 14 men were carrying beats to the second floor, two men carrying one crate. They made marmalade from the beats. The rest of the men carried bricks and wooden planks. We worked very hard till four o'clock in the afternoon. The work was so hard that many nights I could not open my fists and stretch my fingers. However, what was important that after four o'clock in the afternoon, we were free men. On Sunday we continued to visit the ghetto. Everytime I went to Zlata, I prepared for her a loaf of bread, salami, chicken fat [shmalts], a chicken, and a few liters of

milk. In the ghetto a liter of milk was 8-10 zloty. I also use to give Zlata a 1000 zloty so she could get a work permit which stated that she was working. The permit gave Zlata security so she would not have to worry about the SS and the Sander troop [responsible for cleaning up Jewish neighborhoods]. I used to buy large cans of marmalade, and on Sunday [when I went to visit Zlata] take it with me to the ghetto, where I left one half of the can for Zlata, and sold the other half. A ten kg. can of marmalade which I bought for 25 zloty in the firm was selling in the ghetto for 50 to 60 zloty per one kg. Every Sunday I also used to buy 20 liters of fuel. It was very hard for me to carry this kind of load, but my friends, for a fee, helped me everytime. The fuel which I bought for 15 zloty and less, I was selling in the ghetto for 30 zloty and more. I used to leave the merchandise with Zlata. I did not take any money for it. During the week, Zlata bit by bit sold the items. This was how me managed. However, all our efforts did not help. [162] Again we had Actions in the ghetto. Large groups of people were annihilated. Everyday, hundreds of people were murdered. The Germans stopped taking Jews to the Belzec concentration camp, instead, they shot them in the camp and burned their bodies. We were shaking from fear. Everyday, groups of Jews were removed from the camp. We worked in fear, and after work were afraid to go home, to our quarters. We wandered around in small groups until it became dark outside. We did not sleep in peace as before. We were shaking from fear every waking moment. At one point the supply of beats came to an end and I was moved to the construction section. All the time we had ropes ready for a possible escape from the second floor, ropes we used to pull up wooden planks. The moment we saw the Germans coming, we ran to the other side of the factory, and lowered ourselves to the ground

floor. On few occasions, the bandits dropped in on us, and we did not even see them. It was our director, Ulier, who saved us for which he made 30,000 zloty. One time, the camp truck full of soldiers came to Zbaweski Street. However, they were not coming to us. They were supposed to go to another firm but because of a faulty address came to us. During this time they took all the women: Chanah Haus's aunt, Rivale with her two daughters, Sarale the daughter of Laya the short legged. They worked in the 8th leather factory. At this time they let go Natan, Leibish Grinberg's girl Pepe, and Altkoren's sister-in-law. The situation in the ghetto had worsened. Working people were being taken away - entire groups, half groups, 10 persons at a time, 20 persons. There were times when even more people were taken away. We became aware of the fact that the end of the war was near. Trains were being loaded for Belzec. People were jumping off train naked. Many naked people escaped from trains, and returned to the same ghetto they just recently left on their way to death. Josel Eizen was one of the people who jumped off the train, and returned to the ghetto. Chanah Eizen as well as Laicia Barec were already not alive at the time. [163] They were taken away from the Szwarc's firm. The same was true for Szlomoh Barc. Everyday, I and a few others who had wives and sisters in the ghetto, ran to see our dear souls until this horrendous Wednesday. Tuesday, the day before the horrible day, I was in the ghetto and said goodbye to my only, dear sister with her two children. The small Abish, crying, said to me: "Don't leave me." Zlata asked me if it was possible to take Abish and Elish out of the ghetto. I could have taken them out, but what would I have done afterwards ??? [three question marks appear in the text]. My crowned sister told me that for Thursday there are supposed to finish digging the graves for themselves. It

was true. The graves were ready for Thursday. [164] Dear God, why didn't I take them out of the unlucky ghetto? The next month will be a year since the day it happed. I believe that Tuesday was the 2d of June, 1943. I search for the small boy [of my sister]. I wanted to see him one more time, but I did not locate him. I left my only sister in a living grave, and the wild creatures destroyed her life. God forgive my past. Could I have taken a woman with two children? Where would I have hidden them on the first night. My heart misled me. I did not believe it was the end, [165] that they lived their share of life. Who could know? Had i known what was about to happen, I would have looked at them with greater care. I did not believe it. I was thinking it was only fear, and nothing would become of it. My sister always screamed at me: "Moteniu, save yourself, don't look at me. I have two small children, and I must go with them. Save yourself." And she, my sister and the small innocent souls are not here anymore. Never again will I see them nor hear from their sweet mouths the word wujcio [= uncle in Polish]. They were shot in a manner that no sign should remain of the murder and the death, and than their sweet corpses burned. [166] Wednesday, they were still in hiding. Then on Thursday, they were led away with both children. Zlata held small Elish on her hand, while Abele, barefoot, followed her. Natan, Chanah's husband, told me about all this. We both cried. Zlata called out Natan's name. I can imagine how the two souls screamed: "Mamo, mamo [= mom, mom; in Polish], ja sie boje [= I am afraid; in Polish]. As she always said: "I must go with the children", and that is how it happened. Like a heroin, she walked the last road, together with her children, [167] to meet the murderers. I hope God will one day pay the Germans for all the suffering they caused the Jewish people. They must have a terrible

future, a terrible disaster. God please pay them for the horrendous deaths.

XVIII

[167] I want to hope that God will help me, and I'll find myself in a place where I'll be able to continue to write, though it's impossible to describe everything. I am counting the days. Tomorrow will be the 9th of May, the day I may have to move. It's possible that I'll try to sneak into our house and then try to find the hidden fortune. I know the hiding place, but I was not sure whether or not my parents removed the fortune at the last possible moment. Especially that after the holy day Action in Kaminke, I asked them if only possible to manage to come to Lemberg so we could live or die together. However, today I am not sure whether the fortune is still there. Furthermore, my attempt of getting to our home would mean exposing myself to great dangers. My mere walking out into the street is dangerous. On that particular Tuesday, Mechil and Josel came with me out of the ghetto. Our group was missing two workers who escaped a few days earlier to the ghetto, fearing [168] that they may be taken away from their [firm's] quarters. When we reached the ghetto's gate, over 28 men were waiting to come out with us. All of them had fake numbers and yellow patches. I gave mechil a yellow patch. The people who wanted to come out with us, unlike Mechil and Josel, had no place to go. In the mean time, around the fence stood secret agents and Ukrainian SS men. Briskly, we walked toward the Balonawe Street, then through Panienska Street, and almost ran all the way to the slaughterhouse. We asked the extra people to walk separately. Some of them separated from us. From the ghetto gate, two secret agents were following us. One of our friends, Ekirling,

who was with me in the Jewish prison, recognized them. He shared the same sleeping quarters with me. When we divided into two groups, the secret agents followed the other group. Our group was quite large, thirteen persons. Everyone brought with him a friend, a brother-in-law, a brother, for only two possible places. I also led two men. You must know that a set number of people was coming from the camp, and we could not have more people than the given number because the Germans could check on it at any time. When we arrived at Zbojesk with the entire group, we were greeted by our work leader, a man named Goldstein, a former Polish train worker, and his assistant, named Bilewicz, a former director of the Okocime brewery. Both men converted to Catholicism before the war. They were both screaming: "You will bring a disaster upon us". In the meantime there was a commotion among the Christians. They noticed a group of strangers. Us they already knew more or less. We just could not manage. There was a small hideout, a basement, and that is where I pushed Mechil. Josel and about another ten men remained near the ghetto gate. [169] They were screaming: "Take us away from the gate, once we are away, we will find a place to stay". In the meantime the work leader took already two other persons. So now, he went to the Raker factory, and brought the guard post commandant so he should disperse the crowd. However, the post commandant was a very good man. He understood the Jewish problem, so he told the crowd that if they want he will bring them over to the ghetto. It was already dark, in the middle of the night. Josel and two other men began walking to the Bzochowice forest. They entered the forest, but asked themselves where should they go on. One needs a roof over ones head. Josel knew the road well, because he was there once before when he was on the way to Belzec. While on the train to Belzec, Josel and others, using a

knife, ripped a plank out of the floor of the train car, and lowered themselves unto the tracks, between the moving train wheels. Once outside, they proceeded back to the ghetto. The other day, I took Mechil with me to the factory, and got him a job there. In the meantime there were a few children whom the director wanted to protect, among them the sons of Lislipl and Kotlarski. Both of the children were employed in the factory. One time the director gave the work-group leader a letter in which he praised the three new employees. The leader was supposed to show the letter if someone came to check on the workers. Mechil worked as a painter.

The Germans were making the life in the ghetto a living hell. Homes were burned with the people in them, until the last Jewish soul was gone. A few days ago, at dawn, Josel came back. He hid in the courtyard toilet. One of our man went to the toilet very early in the morning, and found Josel hiding in the toilet shed. Josel asked the man to notify me about his whereabouts. [170] I hurriedly came out, and took Josel to the basement where Mechil was previously hiding. Josel remained in the basement for the next twenty five days. He was happy to have a place in the basement, especially that during his escape he was caught, everything was taken away from him, and, in addition, was badly beaten up. Eight days later, two youths who ran away returned. One of the adolescents had a brother in our group. They also his in the basement. Every night, when everybody was asleep, I brought food and drink to the men. I also brought them a small shovel so they could dig another hole in the small basement and hide in it. After 25 days, except for a few selected people, no one knew about the men hiding in the basement. Also the work-group leader and his assistant did not know about the hiding men in the basement. Not a single person from our group passed away. In the

meantime, the work-group leader became aware of the hiding men because Szofu men and the Ukrainian police dropped in for a search. During the search, we were all at work. The men in the basement were not found. However, I came to the realization that the men would be better off above ground than hiding in the basement. It should be also noted that the two friends had to good pistols with them and they would not give up without a fight. Our quarters contained 55 men. If by chance, an unauthorized person was caught [in our quarters], all [55] men would be shot. For a 1000 zloty bribe, I arranged with the director that Josel should work in the factory as a glazier. However, the "wedding" [in the cynical sense] did not last long. At the end not a living soul remained in the ghetto. Jews from the camp went to the ghetto, to clean it up. They were gathering with their hands human intestines, livers, hands, and legs. The Germans searched for Jews in the hideouts with grenades, and then burned the bodies, including people who poisoned themselves because hundreds of people carried on themselves cyanide [poison]. When a wife of one of the man from our group came out of the hideout to say goodbye to her husband and thirteen year old son [171] in the ghetto, she was shot. When Josel went to work on the first day, he told me that it was worth all the money in the world. Today I know what freedoms means. But I would not mind settling for the arrest, if I could only live through the war. Today, after the annihilation of the ghetto, Mechil walked around like someone without a head. He did not eat or drink. He was like a crazy man. No wonder, in one day, he learned that he is not anymore a father nor a husband. We had 92 dollars. I gave Mechil 42, and hid 50 dollars for myself. One day, the factory sent Mechil to Jagielonska Street in town. The firm's director had a business in the area. On the way home, Mechil

and the Christian escorting him home, were caught and brought to the police station on Podrzamce Street where the 42 dollars were taken away. Without delay, they wanted to send Mechil to the sand [death]. However, the Christian worker returned to the factory and reported about happened. the director happened to be in the factory, and went to save mechil. The director did not know about the dollars. However, the director also loved dollars in gold coins. He brought Mechil back to the factory with his car. We were in this place for six weeks, meaning from the 2d of June until the 15th of July, 1943.

Out of no place, on Thursday, seven in the evening, two trucks and a light half truck drove up to our building, about ten guards jumped out and surrounded it. [172] Mechil, Josel, I and a man named Szatan were sitting in our apartment. Suddenly, I saw our people running. In a snap, I stepped out of the apartment [into the hall]. I saw SS men from camp, with machine guns in hand, running towards me, scream- ing: "Hende hoich" [= "Hands up"], and shooting in the air. I recognized the familiar to me camp bandit Szeinbach. Without giving much thought, I jumped into the basement. The Szatan wanted to jump after me, but I told him that he knows that we all have pistols, and if we meet them [the Germans], we'll shoot on the spot. Only at this point, the Szatan covered the opening to the basement with a box. I pushed myself into the second hole, because the small basement had already two men, and a brother of one of the men, a man named Welger or Weiss, a wine merchant's son. [173] The unplugged the hole, which by the way was covered with straw, and let me in. Soon afterwards, an SS man entered the basement and began to search the place. Fortunately, he did not have a flashlight, and was searching with his hands right next to my hand. Luckily, he did not notice me, and left the place. The place was extremely cramped but I

calmed them the men by exclaiming: "Just a little bit longer". The Germans let the round up men return to the apartment so they could gather their belongings. We heard the noise from the running feet upstairs. [174] Because the door to the basement was opened, I overheard the group commandant asked if there is anyone hiding in the basement. It seems that the German, who already happened to search the basement, replied: "No". However, until we heard the "No", our souls almost once again ceased to exist. Soon the entire crowd boarded the trucks and left. Hurriedly, I went up to the attic where I had hidden my pistol. Luckily, they left me a few matches, everything else was removed. I found an old hat, and a torn vest which I kept, because the only clothes which I had to wear was a pair of pants and a shirt. [175] I returned to the basement where we waited for the darkness to come so the four of us could get out. The four of us had revolvers. In the meantime, A soldier came with two Poles to watch the apartments. They searched the apartments and then left, leaving behind a guard to watch the place. Later on, he was joined by a village guard, an Ukrainian, and a civil bandit who used to guard at night on Zbojesk Street, and another man named Gerczok, who used to work with us in the factory, and lived on Zbojesk Street. The night watchman began to search through all corners, as well as into the basement using a flashlight. As he did so, he noticed me. When he saw me, he let out a terrible holler: [176] "Ty Zydzie" [= You Jew"], you have hidden yourself. A cold sweat enveloped me. The Zbojsk had an Ukrainian police-station where they could have finished me off in a few minutes. I began to beg him, but he began to scream at the top of his lungs, pulling on me at the same time. At that moment, I jumped out of the basement, walked over to Gerczon and begged him to save me. However, he told me that the

other man is not doing anything to me. Using all my strength, I pulled myself out of the grip of the bandit hands, jumped off the porch, [177] and ran into the fields. The man ran after me, screaming: "Grab the Jew", and other profanities. I ran for a while, and at one point fell to the ground, realizing that I was not going to get rid of the assailant. I pulled out my revolver. Fortunately, there was no bullet in the firing chamber, and the man did not fire. However, he continued to pursue me. It was getting dark and I ran outside of the man's field of vision. All I could hear was the man's voice. I continued to run for quite a distance until I felt i could rest a bit in the wheat field. [178] After resting for quite a while among the corn, I was on my way again. I don't know what happened to my friends, whether they ran away like I did, or remained. I also don't know what happened to Mechil, Josel, and other friends. I continued in the direction of Kaminke, bypassing the Jewish police-station manned by the Ukrainian police, as well as the town of Remenew. I jumped over two streams. Friday, at dawn, I reached a small forest near Zwertiw, where I rested for a while. [179] Later on, I crawled into a corn field where I dried myself up in the sun. I was all wet from swimming over [a river]. And so I rested there until five o'clock in the evening. At this time I saw a passer by and came out to meet him. I was extremely hungry. I had my last meal Thursday morning, because, after we found out on that day that nothing remained in the Pogodna hideout, we lost our appetite for dinner. We sent the assistant director of the Roker factory to Pogodna Street but to no avail. The only person who could take out the items from the place was someone who lived there. The passer by told me that he had no bread on him. Speaking Ukrainian, I found out from the man where the road was going, and began walking. At first,

I thought of going to the same Warszawski [I once visited before], but I changed my mind. I thought [180] it was not right for an acquaintance to see me after such a long time of separation. Furthermore, he may tell someone in kaminke about me which may hurt me. Soon afterwards, I passed by the village [where Warszawski was living], and went on with the main road. I stopped at a stream, had some water, and, once again, I was on my way. It was a well lit night. When I reached Sabiszane, I turned near the mill, on the side where the train goes to Sokal. From here I followed the train tracks until I reached Jagonia, where I turned to the suburbs of Belzer, and went into the courtyard of Olnicki. I began to knock at the door, and call out. A dog was began barking very loud. Someone inside the house put on the electric light. I was calling Heranka by her name. The looked out the window, and nothing else happened. They did not let me into the apartment. I am sure they recognized me. In the mean time, Razdewinska [possibly the landlady] woke up and started an alarm. Prokofowicz with his son Jendrow came outside to see what was happening. At first I went to Olnicki's small room. However, immediately I realized that it was a bad idea to be hidden in a small room. In the mean time, I saw a few men walking around, and one holding a flashlight. Hurriedly, I went outside, jumped over a fence, and following the field, reached Jagonia. It was almost daybreak. I was planning to stop at Sztopl but I was not sure where he lived. Considering the fact that I was standing next to the home of Jacek Sztreker, I knocked on his window. He opened the door and came out. [181] At first, he did not recognize me. How could he in light of what I went through lately. He asked me to come in. I asked for a drink, and they gave me milk and bread. Later, I asked them if they would let me rest a while, and give me something to cover

myself. I was given a blanket. It is at this point that i asked them not to tell anybody including their children about my visit. There were only three persons in the house: the man, his wife, and his daughter. One son was serving in the Sander [= work] force [working for the Germans], and another son was married and lived separate from his parents. Their married daughter also lived separately. [182] They gave me food twice daily, everyday. I must say that while under their roof I did not suffer from hunger. It should also be noted that only after seven months, they told their younger daughter that I was hiding out in their home. The daughter recognized me right away. And so, here I am, hiding in the attic for the past ten months. At the beginning, every Sunday, they called me to come down. When I came down, I used to shave and wash myself. A few months later, when it became extremely cold, I was coming down everyday, and stay down for a half an hour, and at other times for a whole hour. What I want today is to have this attic until the end of the war. However, my landlord is loading a wagon. And to leave the place now is much harder then at the time when I first came here. Now, in each village, there are army units, and they [Germans] are afraid of the partisans. Only God knows what I will with myself. [183] I don't have the opportunity to speak to Sztreker [the landlord]. Yesterday, his oldest daughter with her husband left. God should help me with my tragedy, and lead me in the right direction. I don't have what to wear. In the meantime, it's extremely cold, and its raining a whole day. Tomorrow is Tuesday. I believe that Tuesday is a right day, an easy day. Maybe the best place to go is to Riznik. He lives in our apartment. However, I am very afraid of the Ukrainian. I am not completing the chapter. It happens to be chapter 18, if God will help, it maybe HI [= in Hebrew the letters Hes and Yud equal 18 in

numbers] to life [as the chapter 18].

Mordechai Sztromer. The 8th of May, 1944.

It's Wednesday evening. I have yet to see the landlord. [184] They [the landlord family] finished loading everything unto the wagon. Tomorrow they are leaving. I remain stranded in the water. God should help me. Throughout the entire period that I was here, Thursday was always a bad omen. I must add that not every Thursday was bad, only a few Thursday. Now bad thing happened on the day i fast. However, nothing actually happened from the bad omen. Let God help me now so when I leave this place I should not encounter any danger. Wednesday the tenth

Mordechai Sztromer

From the entire family, from all the friends, and acquaintances, I was the one who was ready to write. However, at the present, I must take a break. It's possible that once I am in a new place, I will write continue to write about them.

Mordechai.

[185] I want to furnish a short synopses about what happened to our closest family:

1. Our dear father and mother were taken away during the last Action in Kaminke and taken to Belzec.

2. The grandfather was murdered the first Wednesday or Thursday in the store near the bathhouse.

3. Grandfather and grandmother from Narajew passed away of natural causes. They did not have any medication, and Jews were not permitted to travel from one place to another. But what they did have was the right to die in their own beds. I sent them from Lemberg through the mail 1 kg. packages of sugar, medications, and money. However, I don't know whether the packages were forwarded to them.

4. I don't know what happened to Mechil nor his brother, whether they were shot on the spot [when I escaped] or remained in camp. A few weeks later, the landlord's son who was in the Sander service [cleaning units working for the Germans] wrote that today they have shot all the people on the camp.

5. Kwer was the first to die. Izu was murdered on Damarstinowska Street while under military arrest, and then brought home in a sack, and deposited at the door step. Manie (the first Tuesday when the Germans only entered Lemberg) escaped naked from there. Later on, in an Action before the September one, the uncle with the aunt, then one day Manie, and Klara with her boy [were shot]. The SS executed a special Action against the workers who were employed by the SS. Manie worked for them, and Klara was supported by him. They were shot in Lemberg in the sands. Klara's husband was in camp.

May 21, 1944.

Thanks to God, I am in the same place, in the same attic. So far, I am writing in the same place I had done till now. God should help me to live through all this without a major tragedy. I was completely devastated about the fact that the Poles are moving out

of here. However, can I help it in any way. I hope to God that he will not abandon me. As I mentioned earlier, the landlord, his wife, and daughter moved to Krakow. The house was supposed to have been left to one named Szczor. In the meantime, God helped the situation, and the new landlady was Sztreker's sister. She was like her brother, a Folk-Deutch [a German sympathizer]. However her husband was an Ukrainian, and so she with her husband remained [as landlords]. All this happened the last minute on Thursday, the 11th of May. From worrying, I did not sleep the night from Wednesday to Thursday. Very early in the morning I was already waiting to see the landlord. His sister was in the apartment. The landlord called me down from my place, and brought me over to his sister. I know his sister and her husband. The landlord had already spoken with his sister about me, and she agreed but with great fear she agreed. However, for no money in the world was she ready to have her husband know about my staying in the house. Can you imagine my situation? Is it possible to stay in a proprietor's attic without him knowing about it? The situation could be different if the attic had a hideout. [187] The entire attic is empty except for a pile of straw on the floor. I asked the wife to inform the husband about my staying there but she refused to hear about it. I have no other choice. I must agree to her term. I don't have another place where to go. This particular Thursday, I cried bitterly the entire day. In the afternoon, they left and I remained behind. Thursday, like every Thursday, I fasted. Friday, early in the morning, the new landlady brought e food. At the time I was hiding under the straw. Sunday, the landlady went to visit her old home on Zaborze Street, while her husband lit a lamp, and came up to the attic. Three times he visited the attic, searching in all corners Thanks to god, he did not see

me. I should note at this point that downstairs were stationed German soldiers from the front lines. If the landlady's husband were to see something, go downstairs and make an alarm, I would have been shot on the spot. When the landlady returned home I informed her about the incident. We both agreed that it's impossible for her husband not to know about my being in the attic. We decided that on Monday, she would go to town to take care of some business, and upon her return home, tell her husband that she met me, and then on Tuesday i would come to them. She would also tell him I was already hiding in his brother-in-law's home, and he should not worry. Tuesday at dawn, I came down. The landlady's husband was still asleep, and I met with him. I knew him not from yesterday as the saying goes. Already during the Polish regime, he was in prison for a few year for committing a murder. However, everything would be wonderful, if at this time he would agree to keep me. He was very afraid, and here comes to him his younger brother who was helping him with work in the field, and should not know about my being in the house. God should help me. In the meantime, we agreed that we would wait for the old landlord. He was supposed to stop by any day. It's possible that he would resolve the problem. God should help me. The fact that I don't have any money is the worst which had happened to me. I pray to God that he would not abandon me. I had a dream about the Kosher, holy, God holy grandmother, and she told me [188] that she would watch over me as she did when she was still alive. I had dreams on more than one occasion. However, when my Kosher babe comes to my dream, I am sure that no harm would come to me. God help me, and watch the way I am going.

Continuation about Hitler's murders and our close family:

[Continuation of pages 185/186]

6. First of all I want to provide information about the Sztromer family according to age.

Uncle Chaim Hersz together with the deceased grandfather were murdered the first Wednesday in the store next to the bathhouse. His daughter from Kaminke, Rachele, was taken away in the first Action. Her daughter was taken to Belzec. Later on, I believe so, all were shot at Zabode.

His daughter from Lemberg, Eti Gitale, the one who lived with Zlate, her husband and two children were all taken away in the September Action. At the time they were dying from hunger, and Eti was swollen [most likely from hunger]. Zlata used to help her a little bit, but they [Eti's family] were seven persons. One boy was taken away from the factory to Belzec. The fourth son was caught and taken to Winiki camp where he was murdered. Eti remained with only one son, Hercel. He was a tailor. One time he took a piece of leather from the shoe factory. Lately, while we were living on Ordona Street, Eti was not doing badly. She had what to eat as she used to say herself. However, when she had what to eat, there was no one to eat it. However, these are only words. Hercel was caught with a pair of leather soles and they hung him in the Janower camp. I happened to see him beg for his life. Unfortunately, they responded with more beating. There is a whole story about this incident. However, it's enough to say that when Hercel was caught in the factory, he managed to escape. At the time there was still a ghetto and he hid in it. He was together with another Jewish tailor, but the other tailor was hung immediately in the factory. As for Hercel who escaped, the Janower camp commandant, Wilhaus, ordered 25 Jewish

policemen to bring back the escapee by seven o'clock the next morning, or they will all be hung. My dear sister let Hercel hide in her apartment. At the end, he was caught and hanged. Eti Gitale remained all alone. It's most probable that she went together with my dear sister and her children. Uncle Chaim Hirsz had another daughter in Lemberg. Her husband died of natural causes, while she with her daughter and son-in-laws were taken away.

7. Uncle Meir Leibusz Sztromer with his wife, aunt Basia, were taken away from Kaminke to Belzec.

a. His daughter's, Bincze Gewer from Kaminke, oldest son was taken away. As I mentioned earlier, her husband escaped with me, and was almost definitely murdered in Lemberg. Bincze with the two girls hd out until the last Action in Kaminke, at which time she ran with her two children to Lemberg, trying to get into the ghetto. However, in Remenow or Zoltanec, the Ukrainian police shot them.

b. His daughter Szeindel was taken away in the September Action. At the time she was with Zlata in camp. Later on, her husband together with their three children went through very hard times until they were all murdered. His name was Shaul.

c. His son Mosze with his wife Pina were taken away in the September Action.

d. Their son Szaye with hi wife and their children were taken away. His son Sztromer was taken away in the first Action. He and is son Koba worked at a construction site carrying bricks. In the first Action Herman was taken away, and Koba [190] became a Jewish policeman. From the police he entered the camp where he was probably murdered. His sister Loszka was working as a nurse in the Jewish hospital in the ghetto. Later on she worked in the camp hosptal.

She definitely found her end when all the Jews were executed in camp. Salka, Herman's wife, used to stand in the street, in the ghetto, with her mother and sister and sell plecls [= flat cookie]. In one of the Actions, during the Winter of 1942, they were taken to Belzec.

8. Uncle Juda Sztromer. During the September Action, that [memorable] Friday, his wife and daughter Dina Appel were with Zlata in camp. Whoever knew uncle Judah with his beard, was horrified to see him without it. He worked in a tannery together with his two sisters till the end. The factory employed hundreds of Jewish workers. The German director was helping out his workers. However, at the end they all perished. The factory was named L.P.G. No one remained from them, not the daughters, not the son, not the daughter-in-law, not the son-in-laws. I already wrote earlier about the daughter [granddaughter] of the oldest daughter, whose children were raped on Dnieszenia Street. When we came to the ghetto, she [the daughter] with her husband and children were not anymore [dead]. The others suffered some more.

9. I don't know what happened to uncle Szmuel from Greiding, now with the family of my beloved brother-in-law Edelsztein from Strelisk.

10. The children of the deceased uncle Jankel:

a. Mirdsze with all her children were gradually slaughtered in Kaminke and Lemberg. The first to be murdered was her son-law-law, Panczes husband, Abramcze Szprocer in Kaminke. [191] He was imprisoned by the Soviets. On Tuesday, he came home from prison, and

on Wednesday, he was murdered. Pancze with one of his girls was shot on Zaboda Street. The child was thrown alive into a ditch. A boy and a girl were wandering in the ghetto and begging for food. Dania with her husband and her daughter Gusta, her oldest daughter Beila with her husband and the children are not here anymore.

Taubee, Abe, Mirel with her husband and three children, Sorale who married Palpe Dikes - all died in Kaminke. Zelig was a political prisoner under the Soviet regime and did not return home from prison. Zlata's children, together with Toba, and Mirale with her children, were all taken out of a hideout and shot on Zaboda Street. Mirel had a small child in the hideout. When the Germans were searching for the hideout, the child began to cry. The child's mouth was forcefully kept closed. As a result, the child choked to death. There were many people in the hideout. I was even told that our Kosher [= innocent] mother wanted to enter the hideout but was refused. This happened in the very last Action in Kaminke when the town was made "Juden frei" [German, = "Free of Jews"]. Zlate Babes, as i mentioned earlier, remained alive until the end. She was cleaning the ghetto, and she was shot near the very old holy place [cemetery].

The deceased Chaim Icie's wife with all the children, two in Kaminke and the rest in Lemberg - their youngest son used to wander in the ghetto like Pancie's son and sell cigars - are all deceased except for the one who is in Palestine. At the time I was in camp, and I used to meet the boys give them a few zloty.

Mote, Mendel with his wife and children were swollen from hunger. His oldest son died from hunger. [192] Everyone of them has gone.

I don't know what happened to Leja the limping one. However, her

children, Zalke with his family, Sarale, are not among the living.

Chana with her husband Natan Hoisler were the last to see our unfortunate, beloved sister with the children led to the slaughter place. They were taken from the factory to the sands. Natan with a son and the son of the limping Leja remained alive in camp. They surely died at the liquidation of the camp. The following person were taken to the sands from the factory: Chania, Sorele, and Chana's two children. All this took place during the time when the Germans were about to liquidate the camp.

I could tell about everyone all kind of stories; however, the place, the head, and the time is not for it. I hope that I will live through these horrible days. I think that any moment the Soviets will come, knock, and my door will open, and I will be able to see the son. God should help me and I should live to the day when I could see my dear, only brother.

It's extremely hard to describe everything. I remind myself about the time I was returning from work to camp, and saw Jews being brought from the Christian quarter of town. In the group were a few women. One of the woman had two children, girls, nice twins. Immediately after the people were taken off the truck, the SS camp murderers began to beat them and scream: "You are Aryans [pure Christian race]". Suddenly, one of the SS men noticed the mother with the two girls. He grabbed one child, called another bandit, and threw the child in the air while the other bandit shot the child with a machine gun. The mother fell to the ground, fainted. They did the same with the second child. However, this time, the two SS men reversed the roles. [193] The First one threw the child, and the second one was shooting. Both girls fell to the ground full of holes. The children were about two years old. They were beautifully

clothed. It seemed they had enough money to pay for their hiding place in the Christian quarter. The entire episode lasted about ten minutes. It possible this was done for the benefit of the camp Jews, so they can all see it. Do you think that anybody remained alive from the group? Part of the group was lying naked, shot to death, next to the kitchen. I saw with my own eyes how a camp SS man named Bittner, held a baby by its foot, and was hitting its body against the frozen snow, until the baby's head was completely smashed. The same day, the same SS man shot eleven camp workers who were waiting to exchange their shoes. it's better not to mention such things.

Family Eizen

On this memorable Friday, Szeindel Eizen, my brother-in-law's mother, was, together with Zlata, were in the Janower camp. As I mentioned earlier, for some time she was hidden in the attic of Ester's apartment on Marczina Street. I don't remember if the building number was 40 or 41. In the same courtyard, across from Dworowska Street, a blacksmith had his workshop. I clearly remember the location of place, because I am sure that one of the sons lives in Palestine. At one point in the future, he may want to see the place. The elderly Eizen, unfortunately, suffered quite a lot. During her lifetime, Ester with both of her children were taken away, Chanale's daughter passed away, Rochele with the two smallest children were taken away, Josele's child was taken away. She [the elderly Eizen] was with Zlata and the children in the camp. Josel was in camp. Hersz Lejb was in camp. I will not repeat again all the problem which the elderly mother had lived through, it's enough to mention here that the place where they were hiding was uncovered.

[194] Someone said that it was the blacksmith who informed on them, while someone else reported that it was the landlady who did it. When the group of bandits entered the courtyard, and could not get up to the attic - they had no ladder - they opened fire, at which point, the ladder was lowered from the attic. The bandits went up into the attic, and ordered everybody to jump down. The elderly Eizen with the sacrificial Mincha prayer-book was in camp.

Rochele, the oldest daughter, with two children were taken away in the September Action. At the time, Hersz Lejb found his way to the camp as a glazier. Later on, he escaped from the camp, and found a work outside the boundaries of the ghetto. When the ghetto was liquidated, he with his son Motek, and the young daughter, Sida, who was holding on to him, were all taken away. It all happened in the very last period. His two older daughters, Chana and Feigi the one who saved Zlata's children from the ghetto, were working during all this time in the Szwarc factory. When the Jewish workers in the Szwarc factory were liquidated, as young women, the two girls fell into the woman's camp as seamstresses. The unit was called D.A.W., meaning [in German] German-improved-workplaces. They remained in this unit until the entire camp was liquidated, meaning until all Jewish male and female workers were executed. My landlady's son had written the following to his mother: "Today we shot all the Jews in Lemberg, in the Janower camp". He [the landlady's son] was in the Zonder service [cleaning up units] in Lemberg. I mentioned about this earlier, however, I want to repeat myself because I read his letter. He began his letter with the words of a religious Christian.

"Let us praise Jesus Christ.

Dear parents.

Today we shot all the Jews from Lemberg in the Janower camp, men and women. The young women walked to their death with their heads high in the air, singing Yiddish and Zionist songs (the landlady's son knew good Yiddish because he learned how to be a tailor in the shop of the limping Hersz Driker). A part of the Jewish men had revolvers in their pockets, and shot [195] seven comrades from our Zonder service unit".

These are his words. I repeat them because I don't want you to think that the Jews were afraid of death. On many occasions, they responded [to the enemy], however, it was not visible enough. I believe that at the time the camp was being liquidated, Mechil, his brother-in-law Josel from Dorosziw, Josele, Klara's husband Wilek, and some other of my friends were killed. This is the tragedy of the Hersz Lejb Trassler family.

Josel Eizner's wife was taken away from the job in the Szwarc factory. His only child, Renie, was taken away in the September Action. Josel, as I had mentioned earlier, found his way into camp, then escaped from it. Then, sometimes later on, he was caught again in an Action, and loaded into a train heading for Belzec. At this point in time, the people were loaded into the trains naked, and the camp Jews were closing the doors of the train cars. One of the man threw a knife inside the train car. The knife was used later on to lift a wooden plank off the floor. And so, near Rawa Ruska, Josel escaped from the train, and returned naked to Lemberg. Eight days later, in the last Action in the ghetto, as I mentioned earlier, Josel abandoned my previous location where I was staying, and left. Ukrainians caught him, beat him without mercy, and at the end took his money. Later on, he returned to me, and remained with me lying

in the hole for 25 days. Later, he was taken away with all my other friends and Mechil.

Mechil Eizin. Considering that I had already put down on paper everything there was to say about my sister, what remains to be added that she died like a true Jewish heroine with both her children on June 4, 1943 in the Janower camp. The victims were burned, while the children were thrown alive into a burning fire. Not all adults were shot to death. Some lightly wounded victims were thrown alive into the burning fire. I have no idea what happened to my brother-in-law.

[196] Ester Eizen, or Kac, was taken away with her daughter in the first days of the September Action. Later, her son Abale, and Szerpien with Renie, holding hands were urged to the truck. A few months later, her husband Chaim Krancler or Kac was caught in one of the Actions. He had serious problems. We used to be neighbors when we lived on Ordona Street. Zlata was always giving him food to eat. When Ester was still alive, she used to somehow manage their life. She brought a canister of gas or kerosene, trying to make a penny enough for a piece of bread. The children used to eat with the elderly Eizen lady, food which was sent one day by Zlata, and the next day by Chanale from Doroszew. On more than one occasion, our Abele brought the basket of food to his grandmother. He was afraid of the Christian children, but my sister used to persuade him: "Abale go to grandma, nothing will happen to you". When we lived on Bilinkiewicza Street, it was not far from grandma's apartment. Ester and the mother lived on Kardinal Troimbe Street. We asked the elderly Eizen to stay with us or with Josel, but she refused. She did not want and could not leave Ester with the two children. Ester was always running in search for bread. September or the Jewish

month of AV [between July and August] are the worst months for Jews throughout their history, and during the Hitler's period the month had a special impact.

Chana Eizen or Pardes passed away of natural causes. Her husband Szaje, a terribly selfish person, played a major role in her death. He refused to save her. His son Mondzie was taken away in the September Action. I reminded myself when my brother-in-law, at the time when we lived on Bilinkewicza Street, used to have a Minyan in the morning and in the evening, and Szaje with his small son Mondzie came to say Kaddish. The sight [of those two] made ones heart pain. Later on, Szaje moved to his mother and sister. And when the women were taken away together with the children, Shaje remained all alone. Most likely, he was killed in the last Action when Lemberg was made free of Jews.

Josel Haberkon's family

I have no idea what happened to Josel and his son Lonik. During the time we were residing in the quarters provided by the Roker firm, and during the last period when there were no Jews left in the ghetto, we, meaning I and Mechil, inquired whether they [Josel and Lonek] were still alive. We were told that they were alive and hiding someplace. It's possible that in the last minute they removed the hidden items from the attic [hiding place], and used it to save themselves. It would be wonderful if it were true. Szewa was killed that Friday, during the month of AV. According what Zlata told me upon returning from camp, Szewa was not taken to Belzec because they

barely took her out of bed, and she could not stand on her feet. Pepe was also taken away in September. As I had remarked earlier such pearls are not born everyday - such kosher [= pure] Jewish souls.

Szlomo Karic's family

Except for a few items, Szlomo hid most of his fortune. He suffered considerably during the German occupation, so much so that in the factory where he was working he was selling candy and chocolate candy to his fellow coworkers. He worked as a furrier, in a the fur factory L.P.G., located on Zborowski Street, from where he was taken to Belzec. Lajciale worked for the Szwarc firm from where she was also taken away. I don't know what happened to their parents in Zloczew. However, as long as the Jews could correspond by mail, they were sending letters. Later on the Jews were forbidden to write. The departure station for them was not any different from that of other Jews during Hitler's rule. [198] I know that Szlomo hid a fortune in the stable of Lajcia's parents. Most likely, it rotted if it's still there. I also know that Lajcia's older brother was in Zloczew, staying with an engineer by the name of Diner. Another brother, Abraham, worked in his profession as a dental technician. I believe he had his own workshop. Szlomo's parents: his father Chaim Wolf Baric together with Szewa were taken away on Friday; his mother, Chana, was killed before her husband as I already mentioned earlier. They always hoped to live to the day when they could see their children, Szmuel in Argentine, and a son, Nesh's husband Mosze in London. Szlomo had a sister in Zolkew. She with her husband and the children were annihilated.

Because I know that Mosze Hochberg from Doroszew was in the Soviet army, and may come back, I want to put down information about his close family.

Hochberg from Doroszew

His father and mother were taken away in the September Action. They were hiding in Hersz Baumwald's place. One Shabbat morning, Hersz Baumwald threw them out because it became too tight in his hideout. I remind myself how the unfortunate two people ran, on Shabbat, during the month of AV, at 4-5 o'clock in the morning. They ran like irrationally looking for a place to hide in the forest, among the bushes. Unfortunately, on this particular Shabbat, Christian children or adults saw them hiding in the field, informed on them, and they were taken away. They lived through the tragedy of seeing the following being taken away: Josel Eizen, their son-law-law Renie, their only grandson Josele, their son and their daughter Etele. Josel Eizen, Josel Hochberg, and Etele were all working in the coffee factory "Lona", and from there they were taken away. Etale was taken to Belzec, [199] Josel Eizen was sent to the Janower camp, and Josel Hochberg was taken to camp in Wielki Most. Eventually he was also brought to Janower camp in Lemberg. Josel's wife was taken away with Zlata on Friday. Josel's wife had a little baby boy. She wanted to save herself and the baby, so she offered the SS man her fortune in exchange for their lives. The SS man went home with her, took her fortune as well as her and the baby. When they were all brought to Podziemcze, a man came out and called out: "Where is the Jewish woman who gave gold and foreign currency? I

want to send her home". However, because of the thousands of people who were gathered at the Podziemcze, she got lost in the crowd. Moshe Hochberg wife was always carrying packages for the people. She had a brother in the Korowic camp. I don't know what happened to her.

Today is Wednesday, the 24th of May. Tomorrow I will fast. My former landlord's sister hands me up food twice daily. It's hard to get used to her food. In spite of the fact that the former landlady was well off, she could cook something. This landlady is a poor woman and has no food to cook. I would be willing to accept one dry potato if I could only be sure of the place. In the meantime, the landlady informed me today that the army is supposed to leave tomorrow, and they are afraid that the village will be burned to the ground. However, I hope to God that nothing will occur, because all bad thing which are supposed to happen on Thursday must turn to good. God should help me. Today, I was ready to give my landlady five dollars. In the meantime, I hope to live till Friday so I could give her the money. Tomorrow I will not see her, only on Friday, in the morning. Since I changed from one type of cooking to another, I have problems with my stomach, a fact which is very hard on my because I am restricted in my moving around. [200] God forbid, the soldiers downstairs should see me. However, what makes me sick the most is the attitude of the landlady's husband, Zabawka - an Ukrainian. He does not want to know about the whole thing, and is not interested if I get food or not. At the same time, his wife hides from her husband the fact that, everyday, she gives me a piece of bread and a bottle of water. It would be great if I would get bread, but what I get is cold potatoes and sour bread. I would be

thankful to God if they would only keep me. Imagine that I must be afraid of the landlady's brother, as well as of the soldiers downstairs. I am happy that I don't sneeze or cough. I thank God that I am healthy. In the meantime, the May nights are extremely cold, and because of the cold, I can't sleep. At the same time my fear is unbearable now that the army is about to leave. I can't sleep at night because I fear that the old apartment where I am staying, dry like pepper with a roof covered with straw, will burn down in a flash, and I will not have a chance to save myself. However, I hope that God will put the right angel to guard over me, the same God who guarded over me so far will continue to do so in the future. Dear God help me.

I also want to write about our neighbor, Mrs. Tepper. His family name [from home] is Fech. Her father's brother was Josel Fech, Blima Szardes' husband from Kaminke. She had another brother in the Soviet army serving as a driver, and one brother in Belgium. Both of them maybe still alive.

Tepper's husband was in Korowic camp, and remained there. She was a courageous woman - she and her two small children. The older daughter's name was Greta, and the name of the younger daughter I don't remember. On this memorable Friday, Mrs. Tepper was taken from camp, in a transport to Belzec. One of her sister's and the parents were taken away earlier from Tokadewska Street. The only two person who remained were: a limping brother, and a sister wearing glasses. They suffered and hungered in the ghetto. They worked for the air force in Sknilow. On many occasions my sister brought joy to them by serving them a plate of soup. They were taken away before the last Action.

[201] B"SZ [blessed be He] the 28th of May. I thank God that I am alive. It's very hard to survive. My new landlords are terribly afraid. Everyday we hear new information. The army unit which was stationed in Jagonia left, and the village remained unprotected. The landlords are afraid of the Banderowce who may burn down the entire village. Can you imagine that the present proprietor, Zabawka, pulled out the wheat cutting machine from the barn, so if the barn burns down, this piece of equipment will be saved. I don't have any hideout. I lie in the attic, in an open space. I hope that God will continue to guard me. Yesterday, one of the new residents in the village began to move out. He was told that they are going to burn down the village. The people in the village ran to the city council, requesting that the man should not be permitted to leave. The city council ordered the man to stay. Had the man moved out, our landlord would follow. God should guard me and lead me in the right direction. I still continue to hope that I'll survive all these horrors. I would already give my book to hide it someplace in the ground. However, I can part with it. I can still spend a few hours writing in the book. I know that I am writing with mistakes but I can't write in Polish because then everybody could read it. If only God would help me to live through this horrible period, I would, together with my brother-in-law in America, publish all my experiences in a separate work. If I were not so much afraid, I would be able, with a clear mind, to describe all the things that I have seen in greater detail and accuracy. I would tell about the greatest world bandits who are called Hitlerowce [Hitler's men]. The book would be a memoir, a pamietnik [= a memoir in Polish] of an

unfortunate person. Is it possible to describe everything I lived through till this very day? Can anyone comprehend what I go through here, in this place, all the time, the whole Summer of 1943, in the attic, without seeing a living soul, always in the dark. Many months passed by until I made a little hole in the roof. I spent the cold winter in the same attic. It was my luck that the winter was not too cold. However, for a man who must lie in the cold attic all the time, there were enough days and nights when I was completely frozen. I don't even have any underwear. [202] I wear a shirt, and in place of long johns a pair of sport short pants. I did not have an undershirt or a sweater. When I escaped, it was the month of Tammuz [June/July]. On my feet I had a pair of old sandals, without socks or a hat. Only recently, my former landlady gave me a hand out, an old, ripped up jacket from her son, the type worn by the Polish army, and a ripped hat. But all this is nonsense. The most important thing is that God has not forsaken me. Fortunately, throughout the entire period, I was not sick. What would I have don't if I were sick, and needed a doctor. They would call a doctor for me. Definitely not, they would be afraid. God strengthens me and I don't need human help.

Since the former landlady went away, I realize what it means to eat. The former landlady followed a schedule. I knew that in the morning and during dinner time I have to watch for her, and she will hand me up food. More or less, I oriented myself with the time, after the morning milking of the cows, and at dinner time, when she was feeding the horses and cows, I would wait for her and she would hand me up the food. I never went hungry. After many months, the landlady asked me to come to her apartment in the morning, have breakfast and warm up a little bit. This happened during the period

when we thought that the Soviet would come any moment. During the months of February and March, my reception in the landlady's apartment was like a barometer, going up and down as the stocks at the stock market. When the political situation became critical for the Germans, my situation was better, when the Germans pushed back the Soviets, my situation worsened. There were day when the landlord came and told me that he wants to give me back the money I gave him, and I should leave. On a few occasions, it was discussed on Jagonie Street that I should be hidden someplace. One day the landlord's lover came to see him, a woman named Barbara Erd. She called him to a side, and told him that in a discussion which took place in her house, it was said that I should be hidden someplace in Jagonia Street. At the time the woman was speaking to the landlord, I happened to be standing at the door to the attic, and waiting for the landlady to hand me up the wash so I could hang it up to dry in the attic. [203] You can imagine my situation. From Barbara's words I realized that she knew about my hiding out in this attic, though the landlord never mentioned to me that besides him and his wife someone else knew about my staying there. Over seven months their daughter did not know about me. However, in this instance, it was a Thursday, God helped out, and nothing came out of the whole thing. The landlady has no right time for feeding me, and I must wait for her because I don't want her to wait for me. Waiting for the food, meant pushing myself into a stack of hay and wait. Sometimes she brings me a few cold potatoes for dinner, and at other times she goes away, and does not cook, and brings me no food. I am ready to receive everything with love, I want to go hungry, let just God watch over me. One should not think that I am complaining about my landlady. The fact that she is keeping me is enough. It's already a

miracle when she gives me the potato. She did not want to take money from me, even though I offered her 5 dollars, because she is a decent Christian. Yet, she is a poor woman, she does not have enough bread for herself to eat. When her brother was around, she complained to him, and he always gave her some food to take home with her. Had she known before his departure that she was going to remain as the landlady, he would have left her some food. However, it all happened in the last minute. All this would be nonsense if the man could just continue to live, if the second [Western] front would begin, or the Soviet should begin a Summer offensive in which case the bandits who burn homes would stop doing it. And if there would be a need to hide, everybody would have to hide [not just the Jews].

The days are long. My head is drying up from thinking. All kinds of thoughts come to the man's head. Since I came here I pray every day what I remember by heart, and I say Kaddish. I don't believe that I sin by saying Kaddish everyday, because events which are happening to the Jews at present, have not occurred to the Jews at any other time. The times are horrendous. I am saying Kaddish. As of today, I am without parents, and without a sister and her children with whom only a year ago I spoke and could look into their eyes. [204] It's a year since my sister told me that by Thursday the [mass] graves must be ready, and on Thursday she was murdered. In eight days from this Sunday, I will have Kaddish after my grandfather, Shabbat evening going on Sunday. I feel cold when I remember. I don't understand my thoughts, all events which I lived through, my lust for life. All I know that my will to live is overwhelming. I don't know why it is so, maybe because I imagine myself how it would feel to give my brother and my beloved sister a

hearty hug, have a good cry, tell them about the experiences of our close relatives, how they lived and suffered under the German yoke. Maybe I would feel easier on my heart. And maybe I would live to see the downfall of Hitler, or be one of the multiple tenth of thousands of Jews who were killed during the last period.

Today, again, I hear artillery fire from afar. When will it all begin? I know it will not be a child's play, but let it already begin. Maybe the [Russian] will succeed to break through. When will I be able to be a free man? You can barely imagine what freedom means. Only a person who lost his freedom can understand his loss. My situation is much worse than that of a man who is imprisoned, because the prisoner is assured with his life, with food, with work, while my entire existence here is worth nothing. During peace time, if you compare the situation of a serious criminal, sentenced to a solitary confinement, a hard board to rest on, and from time to time forced to fast, to my plight, it's clear that my situation is much worse. The prisoner, in addition to the above mentioned thing has only one other item on his mind [to get out of prison]. He does not have to worry that he can be caught any moment and shot, or he can be burned alive because I am only human, and I can fall asleep, and be burned alive in the straw of the attic. However, my will to live is greater than all the problem put together. You should not think that other Jews did not want to live. They were struggling to live. It's horrible to remind myself that a year ago today, I was in ghetto. It was a Monday, and Tuesday, the last Tuesday, I still brought them [Zlata and the children] a tin of cook meat, but who knows if the tiny pigeons [the boys] had a chance to eat it. All mighty God, [205] I will not hear from heir sweet mouths another word. The mouths are closed forever. Unfortunately, they also wanted

to live. And how they understood that they must suffer for the name Jew. My eyes are filled with tears. In another eight days it will be a year since I first came here [?, probably a year since he came to the attic]. Will I live to see the second Sunday? And if till this day, a Hitler is still here, and the Jewish problems did not come to an end, Oh God punish him already.

I want to add a few accounts about the life of our mother's only sister, the ciocia [= aunt] Peszale, her husband, and her children, because i know that one child went to the army in Russia. It's possible that Liber will return. It so happened that both cousins, Liber Kwer and Meir Sztromer are in the army. God should guard them both so they would come home. As I had written earlier, the first one to be killed was Izu, the youngest son. The moment the Germans arrived, the whole place was in total chaos. Whoever only wanted was murdering and beating the Jews. The guard from Gazowa Street 6 came and took Monie and Izu to work. He brought them to Damarstinowa Street. Here the Jews were tortured, and there the Jews were murdered. Manie managed to escape from there completely naked. He saw how his brother was murdered. He escaped though badly beaten, so much so that he was bedridden for a few weeks. His wounds were so bad that they wrapped him in sheets. Its possible that Jews killed his Christian acquaintances from the factory, and later on, put him in a sack and brought him to gazowa Street. They left him near the door, and rang the bell. When the aunt came out to open the door, they told her: "So here you have Stalin". You can just imagine our unfortunate aunt, and she had to live on. Manie somehow managed to get better, and began to work. The same was true for Klara's husband, Wilek, who worked for the Jewish organization. Wilek made

sure that Klara was not missing anything. He was an extremely capable manipulator, and brought home everything possible. [206] In one of the Actions, our uncle went to visit a neighbor. It so happened that the SS men came in, and asked him for identification. He did not have it on him. The id. was both for him and the aunt. The uncle wanted to return to his apartment and get the id., but the Germans did not let him. When the aunt began to beg them to let him return to the apartment, they took her as well. Monie and Wilek were at work at the time. When they returned home, Wilek, who came first, ran to the assembly point on Sobieski Szalila. He went over to the Jewish police, and almost had the aunt near the gate, but at the end he did not succeed. Later on, Monie brought a German from his work place. This happened at the beginning of the German occupation. However until they came, they already did not find the aunt and uncle. They were already loaded unto the train car on the way to Belzec. This is how my mother's sister and her husband departed. Only Klara, with a small child, a boy, her husband and Monie remained alive. The uncle's sister with a son moved in with them. Klara was never a great heroine. However, she had a very good husband. He used to take care of everything, and during the German occupation he was trying to trade. During this period he worked for the Jewish community, and was always traveling with the town's overseer. They used to take furniture from the Jews and deliver it to the Germans. In one word, he was making good money.He worked for the Jewish community until the September Action, at which time the identification cards of the community workers were not stamped. At the last moment, he managed to get another job in the known (H.K.P.) Heres Kraft Park. Again Monie was fired from his position, and he got a job working as a locksmith for the SS. In the first position

he also worked as a blacksmith. [207] Klara had two [id.] documents: one from Monie as someone who takes care of a home, and from her husband. In the meantime they were forced to leave their apartment and move into the ghetto. Monie as an SS worker, received a nice apartment on Damarstinowska Street, on the first floor, a corner apartment, across from a paint factory. At this time we were living on Ardona Street. Klara with her husband, and Monie were always visiting us. Zlata with the children was also visiting Klara. Wilek used to trade, and bring everything to his wife. Slowly, she could have become a proprietor. At the time, I was carrying flour from the Christian quarter back to the ghetto, and Klara happened to live near the ghetto's gate, meaning near the park. So when I was coming with flour on my belly, I used to stop at Klara's place, and only then proceed to Ordona. Monie and his brother-in-law were regular guests in our home. After the September Action, it was quiet for a period of time, until one day, the SS ordered an assembly where all its workers had report to their jobs. However, the people already knew that fom many of these assemblies people had not returned. In the best case, one finds his way into camp.